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CHRISTIAN PROFILES IN A PAGAN MIRROR

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CHRISTIAN PROFILES

IN A PAGAN MIRROR

BY

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PREFACE.

'A Christian is one who knows Christ as a friend, and knows, therefore, what Christ thinks about politics, about fashions, about men's trade and children's games, about things the greatest and the least. A Christian is one who sees his Master going along the narrow way of right, across and athwart the ways of rival sects, daring to be true, though priests condemn and crowds shout. . . . A man who thus knows Christ passes by temptation; the mind of the spirit is peace.'—CANON BARNETT.

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EXPLANATORY.

An enlightened pagan Lady comes to England to acquaint herself with the beliefs, the habits, and the customs of Christians. She has long been asking herself such questions as, Who are the Christians? What do they believe? What life do they lead? How do they conduct themselves towards each other? Having made inquiry and received impressions, she reports as follows to a friend in India.

The City Temple, 1898.

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CHRISTIAN PROFILES

I.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

You have asked me to tell you all I can about the people who call themselves Christians. Though I have been a few years in England I cannot yet write English without making some mistakes, and I may tell you at once that sometimes I say the very thing I did not mean to say. I now get a kind friend to read what I write, and to correct the mistakes which I so often make. I will get my friend to read carefully what I am now

writing, so that I may not mislead you in relating what I have seen of the Christians and their ways. You and I have often read little books about them, but I could not rest until I came to this country to see the actual people themselves.

When I first came to England I said to a very civil policeman,

'Where are the Christians?'

And he used words I did not understand; and, do you know, I thought the poor man had some kind of trouble on his mind; in quite a rough way he said,

'Foreigner, where was you brought up not to know that we are all Christians?'

'All Christians?' I timidly inquired, and he said,

'Every man Jack but one, and every cat and dog; why, bless you, this here is a Christian country down to the door-mat and the scraper.'

I wondered what he meant when he said

that all were Christians but one. I did not understand the man at the time, but my friend has told me what he said. I was so pleased to find that all the English are Christians, for I thought perhaps the Christians lived by themselves in very beautiful gardens, or were dressed in gold and lace, or never went out on the streets and mingled with the common public. But this is not at all the case—all the English people are Christians, even the policemen, and the House of Commons, and the gamblers, and the sellers of strong drinks, and the very richest of the rich. You do not find a Christian here and there, as you might find a very tall man or a very mettled horse, nor do you find Christians with labels round their necks telling how good they are. When you speak to anyone, no matter what his clothes may be, he is sure to be a Christian, even if he is riding in a car-

riage, and if he is not riding in a carriage it is all the same. The policeman perhaps was only agreeable, though he was not given to smiling, when he said the door-mats were Christians, for I did myself hear a lady saying to her boy who had been walking in thick mud, 'Wipe your feet like a Christian.'

Do you know why all English-speaking people are called Christians? I will tell you. It is because they love a very wonderful person who lived long ago, whose name was Jesus Christ. That is why. They are Christ's-ones, Christians,—they are called after their Master because they love Him so, and do their best to carry out everything that He told them to do. They do not please themselves; they please Jesus Christ. Mahommedans are called after Mahomet, and Buddhists after Buddha, and Confucians after Confucius, and in the same way Christians are called

after Christ. And they are all Christians, they all love Jesus Christ; and they would not allow anyone to speak a single word against Him.

The prisoner is a Christian, and the judge is a Christian; the murderer and the man who hangs him are both Christians. The woman with whom I first lodged was a Christian, who stole my pocket-handkerchiefs, and put my sunshade where I could not find it any more; she was a Christian with a harmonium and a back parlour, and a Sunday cap. She was a kind of Christian I did not understand. I felt sure from what holy men had told me in church that Jesus Christ did not allow people to be thieves. I was quite sure something was wrong in that woman, so I got the sacred books of the Christians, and I went as often as I possibly could to their holy places, and I heard hymns and prayers

and sermons, and then I knew a good deal better who the Christians were.

There is much difference amongst them. I saw that some were good Christians and some were bad Christians, just as some apples are good and other apples are not good, but I never call an apple-tree bad because there may be one or two bad apples growing on its branches. I soon saw how far wrong I had been. The policeman did not tell me the truth. You must not believe all you hear upon the streets, but you must read the holy books. Sometimes the door-mats are quite as much Christians as some of the people who stand upon them.

I will tell you all I know about the real Christians, and you will come to love them as much as I do. I thought it right to tell you about the policeman, because you might be deceived as I was, and think every man was a Christian simply because

he spoke English. I know now that no bad man is a Christian. That is a great thing to know. The holy books of the Christians have taught me this. You will find it is the same with Christians as it is with coins: some are real and some are not real. You may say all men are men; some men you can trust, and some men you cannot trust; some men are wise, and some men are foolish. It is just the same with Christians.

Let me tell you, and you must believe me, some people call themselves Christians who know nothing about Jesus Christ; and you must always remember this, or you will fall into many mistakes. I got the holy books and read them, and I went amongst the holy people and studied them, so you may depend upon my word.

There is as much difference amongst English speakers all over the world as there is between nettles and roses, or as

there is between wasps and birds that sing, or even as there is between poison and food. The nettle and the rose may both be called vegetable, but it does not follow that they are both beautiful.

The policeman did not mislead me intentionally, as I have now clearly come to see. A bishop would have given me the same answer, but not in the same words; the bishop would have said, 'England is a Christian country,' or he would have said, 'We are a Christian people.' And what more did the poor policeman say?—a policeman whom I am sure was carrying, as I have told you, some trouble in his heart. I did not think the policeman spoke good English, but for all that he was an Englishman. So some Christians do not speak good Christianity, yet they would be offended if you thought they were not Christians.

You see there is a difference. Grammar

does not make the Englishman. A man may be blind, but he is still a man. There are some Christians who know they are not good, but they very much wish to be good, and because they want to be good, really and truly want to be good, God looks kindly upon them. A man may be a very poor reader, but he may keep on getting better and better until he can read quite well. You must not stop him in the middle of his bad reading, and tell him that it is no use his going on; you ought to tell him to keep on reading, and tell him that every day he will read a little better than he read yesterday. It is just the same with some Christians. They do not do very well at present, but they try to do better, and little by little they improve, and by and by they come all right.

Is it not the same when a flower is growing? You must not look at it the

first day and tell it that it is not worth looking at, but you must wait many days, and in the end you will see the flower in its full beauty. Your little son, Musha, may know nothing about the world he lives in—how can he know much when he is only two years old—and yet you do not on that account deny that he is your son. It may be just the same with some Christians. An eagle is not born flying, but he is born to fly. Do not mock him when he falls out of his nest upon the hard stones; give him time, and give the Christians time.

Perhaps you will ask me whether the woman in whose house I first lodged had not time to grow a Christian? I must ask you to wait. I have something to tell you about that woman, which will show that sometimes we have to wait for good things. The seed does not grow up the very day after it is put in the ground. There may

be good things in a man's heart which only time can bring into view.

The Christians have many sacred books. I think there must be more than sixty, but they are so small that they make only one book which even a little child may be strong enough to carry. The small books were written by Moses, and David, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Matthew, and Luke, and Paul, and others. Many of these men, perhaps the whole of them, belonged to the people called Jews. When all the little books are gathered into one book, the English people call it the Bible.

The Bible is made up of two divisions: the one is called the Old Testament, and the other is called the New Testament. I have read all the Bible through, yes, every line and word of it, because I did not think I could form a right opinion about it until I had read it all. To read

it all is one thing, but to understand it all is quite another . . . Much of it I do not understand, so I let it alone until I have had more time to study it. Many chapters—for I must tell you the English Bible is divided into chapters and verses —are all names, names of kings, and warriors, and heads of families, and all kinds of mighty men, and in some of the chapters there are names of women who did wonderful things in their own times.

It is quite unnecessary for me to know all about these at present. I think many people get wrong because they want to know everything at once, instead of reading carefully and waiting patiently. Your little son, Musha,—you see how I think about him—does not know the names of the mountains around him, but he knows his father and his mother and his nurse, and other things he will know by and by. I do wish people understood the art of

letting some things explain themselves by time and experience. When you read the holy books put aside all the parts you do not understand and ask the best teachers you can secure to tell you what they mean, but never be in a hurry about these things. It would really do Musha no good to make him tell you the names of the mountains. It is enough for the present to know and to love those who are round about him.

I wanted to know almost first thing of all about the wonderful God spoken of so much in the Christian's Bible. He is a wonderful God; I may say even more wonderful than Jesus Christ, the great man from whom the Christians, as I have told you, take their name. I will tell you about him little by little as I am able to do so, but you must not turn over a single page until you have read it every word, for only in this way can you understand the page which you have yet to read.

No man has seen God; no man can see Him; no man knows how He came to be God; God is a Spirit. The Christians say that God made the sky, the sun, and the stars, the earth and the sea, and everything great and small. Yes,—really everything! Things we see and things we do not see, and things we cannot see until we die, and perhaps not even then! The Christians say that they live and move and have their being in God, and that God is everywhere, and that He sees, and knows, and hears everything in heaven and on earth, and under the earth. I am not saying these things are true or are not true. I am only telling you what Christians believe and teach about their wonderful God. They describe him as a Person; not as a breath, or an influence, or a force, but as a separate, living, independent Person. I tell you it thrills me. It makes everything new to me.

In some way or other God made all the little flowers, so I dare hardly pluck one even in wild places, for I think I am stealing from the very hand of the living God. It is not so wonderful to me that God should make suns, and stars, and great mountains, as it is that God should make blades of grass, ears of corn, and little birds, and even butterflies and insects. That is certainly very wonderful.

Then the Christians tell me that God sees us all, and that we cannot hide anything from Him. They say that the darkness makes no difference to God. The Bible says the darkness and the light are both alike to him. This is awful,—it makes me quake and tremble very much, and sometimes to feel as if God were standing quite close to me and looking me through and through. All this you will find in the Bible.

When I ask the Christians how the Bible

knows so much about God, they tell me that God Himself told good men what to put into the Bible. Man only knows as much about God as God has told him. In this way the Christians came to think of the Bible as God's book, or as some call it the book of God. God did not write the Bible with His own hand, but He told good men what to write, so that they are quite right in thinking that if God told the men what to write, the book is the book of God. The Spirit of God speaks to the spirit of man. Spirit does not speak to flesh, for flesh could not understand it; man is not akin to God in the flesh, but he is akin to God in the Spirit: therefore, the Spirit of God speaks to the spirit of man, and does it in the words of man. That is how the Bible comes to know so much about God. How God does all this I do not know, but this is what the Christians believe, and I think it is most beautiful.

I am hoping that some day God will speak to me,—perhaps He is speaking now! This may be God's writing, though it may have many mistakes in it; of course it is only natural that it should have mistakes, but the thing you have to bear in mind is, that the mistakes are mine, and that the truth is God's. God has many names in the Bible. You might think from the names that there are many Gods when you read such a list as:—God; Jehovah; Lord of Hosts; Lord; Lord God Almighty; Most High; the Holy One of Israel; Rock; Shepherd; the High and Lofty One; the most beautiful of all—Father! These are not different Gods, they are only different names of the same God. It might be the same thing with a man; he might be a poet, an antiquarian, a philosopher, a farmer, a hunter, a citizen, and we might sometimes call him the one and sometimes the other, but he would still be only the one man

though he might be called by many names.

The Christians say that because God made all things, all things are God's, and one day He will want to know what we have done with them! And this is not all. God will one day want to know what we have done with ourselves!

The Christians say there will be what they call a Day of Judgment. Let me tell you what I have heard about it! No man knows when the Day of Judgment will come. It will come quite suddenly, perhaps like a flash of lightning; a great trumpet will sound—such a long and mighty blast as never was heard before—and all men, and women, and children will come in front of a Great White Throne, and God will ask them all they have done during the time they were upon the earth; and if they have done well He will send them into a beautiful city, far away above the sun, and if they

have not done well they will be sent into darkness,—the Christians call it 'outer darkness,' like blackness, like darkness which the light can never get at; I could not tell you how dark it is, it makes me blind to think of it. Will not that be a wonderful day?

That day will decide everything. Not only Christians will come before the Great Throne, but all men everywhere all round and round the whole earth, the Indian and the negro, the king and the peasant, the dainty lady and the horrible savage, the yellow Chinaman and the painted cannibal. I am only telling you what the Christians believe. Is it not wonderful? I think it is beautiful, and it is just what ought to be. Is it right that bad men should make other people suffer and never be punished for it? God will say, 'What have you done to your wife, your child, your manservant, and your maidservant,'

and He will even say, 'What have you done to the animals I have put under your care?' He will say to England, 'What did you do to India? What did you do to people whom you cheated?' God will say to great countries, 'Why did you go to war? Why did you kill one another?' This is what God will do. Is it not beautiful? Is it not grand?

Then every man will get what is due to him, for the God of the Christians is just. He will not spare the guilty, not even if it was the king's son, but He will be gentle to those who have not been able to do much good because they have been ill, or poor, or weak in mind. He will know whether they meant to be good, and if they did mean it God will be gentle to them, just as you would be gentle to a lame child who wanted to come to you but could not because he was weak and in pain.

Do you know I begin to love the Christians' God? I love Him because He is so full of love. He loves women and children, and all who are in grief, and He wants to save everyone who has done wrong and is sorry for it. He will not help men who are not sorry for doing wrong.

The Christians say that God loves the whole world, and they even say that He loves India, and Japan, and China, as much as He loves all the countries where the English language is spoken. At first I thought He was the God of the English, or of the people who speak English, wherever they may live. That was a great mistake on my part. The God of the Christians loves one part of the world just as much as He loves another. He will not force Himself into any heart, but He will come into every heart that really wants Him to come. The Christians have

a beautiful picture which has come down to them through many centuries:—'Behold I stand at the door and knock'—think of that! The heart is the door, and God asks to come in—'if any man open the door'—God will not force it open; it must be opened from the inside, which you know is the custom of all hospitality—'if any man open the door I will come in.' This is beautiful, and how simple it is! But that is always the way with the Christians' God when He wants to bless men: He speaks to them as if they were little children, and how can we be anything but little children to Him who made suns and stars that have been burning in His sky so long? Why, the very oldest man you ever knew, even Samradi who wandered on the banks of the Ganges for more than ninety-five years, was only like your own Musha in the sight of the great God who inhabits

Eternity, and counts a thousand ages as one little breath. The gods of the Vedas are thirty-three, yea, and more and more, and are not the demi-gods more than six thousand in number; and who can count the deities of the Hindu! But the God of the Christians is One, and they say that of His dominion there is no end.

II.

SPIRITUAL DAWNINGS.

They say the gods of the Hindu are three hundred and thirty millions,—why, they must be more in number than the stars that shine in the whole sky! Can you really imagine the meaning of three hundred and thirty millions? No mind can think it. No fancy can dream it. The Christians, I have told you, have only one God,—one Father; how different from three hundred and thirty millions of gods! The Christians say that their God is more tender and more loving than a mother who

presses her first-born to her grateful heart. Once I said to Nearcha,

'What if a panther should eat your little babe,—the sweet flower of your life?'

Nearcha said, 'The panther would have to eat his mother first.'

Nearcha meant that she would stand between the panther and her babe. That is just what the Christians think of their great Father God! I have heard a holy man say that before an enemy could hurt a Christian he would have to destroy the Christian's God. The Christians think that God is all round them like the air, or like the light, taking care of them, and making their hearts happy because he loves them.

I was so astonished when the Christians told me that their God loves even women and children! Women and children are thought of as souls or spirits just as much as men are. The Jews did not always

look upon girls as children in the same sense that boys were children. All this is done away by the Christ in whom the Christians put their trust. Even in the Old Testament you will find the names of women, such as Miriam, and Deborah, Sarah and Rebecca, Elizabeth and Mary, and Phœbe and Persis, and many more.

One of the greatest men in the New Testament, called the Apostle Paul, says that in Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female, bond nor free, but that all people are equal in the sight of God. Whenever the holy book speaks about a baby it seems to kiss him. The first baby I read about was called Moses. He was a very beautiful child, and when he was only three months old he was put into a little cot made of bulrushes—a large kind of bird's-nest—and the little cot was laid upon the great river of Egypt. The king of Egypt had made up his mind to kill all

the boys born to the mothers of Israel, so the mother of Moses tried to save her little child. God saved the baby, and the baby became a mighty man and wise, so that his name runs through all the holy books of the Christians. You can hardly open one of those books without finding the name of Moses. Then there was a beautiful boy-baby called Samuel; and last of all there was the most wonderful baby of all, who was born in a stable, the very baby by whose name the Christians are called, —*Jesus Christ!*

This great man was so fond of little children; what do you think He did? Boys and girls were all the same to him; when mothers brought their children to Jesus He took them up in His arms and blessed them. Did ever a man take up a little child into his arms without kissing him? Did ever a man pluck a rose without smelling it? It was just the same with

Jesus Christ. When He took an infant into His arms He pressed it to His heart and sealed it with a kiss. Do not forget His dear name,—Jesus Christ; I have said it over and over again until it has become like a little song in my ears. I want you to think of it, and say it, and tell it to other people. Do you know I think there is a blessing to be had even by saying the sweet name over and over again. The Christians say that it is a name above every name, and I can well believe it, for already it is making my heart feel happier than it ever felt before.

I have heard that if you speak about Jesus to others, or even to your own heart, Jesus Himself will draw near and fill you with joy and peace; and I can well believe it, and I should be deeply sorry if I had to give up this holy faith.

God loves all little things: when you

come to read the holy books carefully you will find that God takes care even of the birds' nests, that He watches the falling sparrow, that He counts the hairs upon the heads of those who love Him, and that He puts their tears in His bottle. The Christians say that God knows every thought in the heart and every word on the tongue; He knows when people go out and when they come home, when they rise up and when they sit down, and they say that God sees in the dark just as well as He sees in the light. This is the kind of God I want to believe in. I can only care for a God who cares for me. This is not selfishness; it is human nature at its highest and at its best. That a fellow-creature should care for me is a most welcome thought; how welcome then must be the grander thought that God who made all things, great and small, watches every step I take, and looks into the

thoughts which I have not yet put into words. This is what the Christians believe, and this is what they preach, and it comes into the heart as an angel might come. It is a wonderful thought. I understand it only as the flower understands the morning sun.

The God of the Christians is more wonderful than Varuna sung of in the Vedas. That god seems to be all outside; very splendid and dazzling, but never coming into the heart, never drying the tears of sorrow, never thawing the ice of despair. Does not Varuna sit in a palace with a thousand gates, and thence does he not descry the flying birds and the sailing ships? Doth not Varuna know the twelve months one by one, and name by name, and doth he not know the month that is above the twelve? Doth he not spread his noose so as to catch men who tell lies? And are they not wonderful

nooses, never entangling the man who speaks that which is true? This is very good, but it is not enough. You will say what need have we of the Christians' God?

Did not one man pray to Varuna, 'If I go along trembling like a cloud driven by the wind have mercy, almighty, have mercy?'

I asked one of the great Christians whether that was not enough? I said that many gods claim to be almighty, and that some of them professed to make a distinction between right and wrong. I sent him this very prayer, and his answer I can give you just as he wrote it:—

'The prayer you quote is very good; it is a prayer I could pray to my own blessed God. You must not think that Christians deny that there is good in other religions. They do nothing of the kind. They think that in all religions there is something

good, but that the Christian religion is the only pure and true religion; and they do not only say this as if they were merely boasting, they are willing to put it to the test of real life, and they are willing to adopt whatever religion works best and does most good.'

That was the answer, for I got him to write it down, so that I might make no mistake about it. I like the idea of submitting every religion to the test of daily life. I prefer the sun to a candle, because it gives me more heat and light. I prefer a flower to a nettle. I prefer a bird that sings to a bird that is silent. In the same way I prefer a religion which makes men good to a religion which makes them only clever. If there were two organs and I wanted to know which was the best, I should not look at them nor measure them, or even count their pipes, I would play them and judge by the music. An

organ is not good simply because it may happen to be beautifully decorated; it is the inside of the organ and not the outside that determines its quality and value. The Christians say that this is what they would do with all religions, and whichever religion made the best men they would accept as true. Can you say anything better than this? Surely this is the greatest test of all, and Jesus Christ Himself was always ready to submit to it.

You must remember that the Christian's God is the same in all climates. The old Aryans lived in a cold climate, so they made a hot god, and they made everything about him brilliant and flower-like. The Christian's God is the same in hot countries and in cold countries,—in ice and in fire. The Christian's God thinks that all men everywhere and through all time are fundamentally one. The Christians say

that God made of one blood all nations of men. The Christians make out that all men are akin,—and that they are akin to one another simply because they are all akin to God.

(1.) When I ask the Christians about God they always tell me that the best way of knowing God is to study the Life of His Son, Jesus Christ. That Life is written in four little books called the four Gospels. You can read them all through in a few days, I think I may say in a few hours. It is impossible for any man to find out the true God for himself; and it is impossible for any man who has found out God for himself to make any other man understand who and what God is. The man can tell all he himself knows, but there is always something which every man must find out for himself.

At first I did not like the answer which

the Christians gave me about finding God through Jesus Christ, but I now see that the answer is wise and right. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh,—God in the body and form of a man,—God made so plain that with our eyes we can almost see Him shining through the body of His dear Son. If Jesus Christ were nothing but a man, the same as any other man, or the same as the best man the world has ever seen, the answer would not satisfy me; on the contrary, it would perplex and disquiet my soul; but the Christians say that Jesus was so great, so good, so wonderful, that anyone who knew the Son knew the Father also. This is what Jesus Christ Himself said, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;' 'He that hath known Me hath known the Father also.'

I told you that Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger, in a little

village called Bethlehem. Afterwards He lived as a plain man, working for His daily bread, just as any of us do, until He was thirty years old, and after that He began to teach.

I must ask you to note that Christ was not a boy but a full-grown man when He stood up to tell the people what He had to say about God and truth. I often wonder what the thoughts of Christ could have been during the silence of thirty years. But we need not know such things. I do not know what the rose has been doing or thinking, if I may so say, during all the time it has been growing; it is enough for me to know that it has come to be one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen, and that it gives away its very soul in most delightful fragrance. It is just the same with Jesus Christ. How He spent the thirty years at home, and what

He was thinking all the time, we can never know, but we can know what He said and did when He came before the world as a public man.

I have read all His printed words, and they thrill me through and through. It is all so strange! The wonderful works which Jesus Christ did are often called miracles, or signs, or wonders; amongst those wonders are such actions as giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead. He fed thousands of people with a few loaves, and when His disciples were in trouble He walked to them on the sea without sinking! At first I did not see how this could be, but when I came to know Jesus better everything was quite plain. I soon saw that Jesus Himself was much greater than any of His own wonderful works. His works were not so great as His words. Jesus was

alive all over. His very clothes seemed to be alive.

Once a poor suffering woman made her way to Him in a great crowd, saying to herself, 'If I may but touch the hem of His garment I shall be made whole;' and she did touch it, and she was made whole! Jesus said it was her faith which had brought healing and strength to her poor flesh.

You remember what a great horse the proud Mazda rode; you remember the sweeping mane, the red nostrils, and the kindling eyes,—was there ever so great a horse known!—and you remember how one night in his stable he trembled and whinnied and neighed as if in mortal fear, and the grooms did not know why, and the proud Mazda himself could not explain the shivering and terror of the noble beast. But a wise old servant searched the stable and found brushwood that had been

brought from the jungle, and that brushwood had been slept upon by a great tiger for many nights, and the scent of the cruel beast was detected by the sensitive nostril of the horse, and that scent made the fiery steed quake and shiver in mortal agony. You can put this to the test with any horse. If you will carry a bundle of straw on which a tiger has slept into any stable the horses will tremble and perspire as if the tiger itself were there. Why then may not the clothes of Jesus have had healing in them? Why think that a tiger has more influence than a man? That the horrible fear was created by the tiger is certain, is beyond all doubt, why then may there not have come out of the clothes of Jesus a healing and comforting influence?

I believe that all things could help us if we could come to them in the right way, all flowers, all winds, all sunbeams,

all birds, and every leaf in the forest.

(2.) I must tell you that the sacred books of India are now printed in the English language, and many who speak English are much pleased with them. Reading our books in the English language, I see beauties in them which I did not before perceive. That is often the way with books that are passed from one language to another. A Christian told me that in reading Luther's German Bible he saw beauties in it which he had not seen in the English Bible. Great men here have turned the Sanscrit into most musical English. A learned Christian has put into English one of our great hymns to the Dawn. Here is a specimen taken from a book :—

'Thou who art a blessing where thou art near, drive far away the unfriendly; make the pastures wide, give us safety! Remove the haters, bring treasures!

Raise up wealth to the worshipper, thou mighty Dawn!'

The Christians do not pray in this way. They always pray in the name of Jesus. They do not pray to Jesus the man, but to the God who is in Jesus.

You will ask me what Jesus has done that God should hear and answer prayer for His sake? I will tell you. The Christians say that Jesus died for sinners. You will say, What are sinners? I will tell you: sinners are people who have done anything wrong! You are a sinner, though you have never heard the word before. I knew I had done wrong many a time, but the word sin was new to me. You cannot do wrong to a man without committing sin against God. That is very mysterious, but it is a doctrine which the Christians hold very strongly.

Christians say that all men have done wrong,—all men,—all men all over the

world, and all women, and all children; they say that wherever there is a man there is a sinner. If a man were to steal your money the Christians would say that the man has robbed God as well as robbed you. They connect everything with God. They are very fair about this, because they not only connect everything bad, but also everything good with God. Perhaps you do not quite see what I mean; then let me tell you. If you saw anyone hungry, or naked, and gave him food or clothes, the Christians would say that you had not only given these things to the poor man, but you had also given them to God.

To come back to sin, I may tell you that the Christians say that Jesus Christ died that everyone might become right! If you really believe that Jesus died for you, it is quite certain that you will be saved. Do you think it is easy to believe

because it costs you nothing? That is where people get wrong. It is not easy to believe. It is very hard to believe. The Christians say that you cannot believe without doing good, without having what they beautifully call a new heart, or a clean heart, and if you yourself are not good then they know in a moment that you do not believe what you say you believe! If you say you believe and do not the actions which should flow from belief, then they will not believe a word you say. They will think you have told two lies, first that you believe, and second that you wish actions to be thought good when they are not good. If you think that you can believe that Jesus Christ died for you, and that you can still do all the bad things you did before you ever heard of Him, this is what the Christians call error, and they are sorry for you. Belief and action go together, the same as seed

and harvest, the same as cause and effect, the same as love and help.

If you really believed that your dear little child was going to die, you would do all you could for him. Why would you do all you could for him? Simply because you have a certain belief about him. If you had not the belief you would not send for the physician. If you believed the contrary, you would not allow the physician to come to the house. So you see everything turns upon belief. If you believe with all your heart that Jesus died for you, and rose again, you would do all in your power to please Him because you would be so thankful and so happy.

Now let me tell you how this is. I will show you how belief comes out of the heart into the hand and makes a new hand of it. I told you that the woman with whom I lodged when I first came to Eng-

land stole my handkerchiefs and put my sunshade where I could not find it any more. Now I keep my promise to tell you something more about her. That same woman has brought back to me all the things she took away! Is it not wonderful!

'What makes you bring back all these?' I said to her.

'I must bring them back and say I am very sorry,' she answered.

Then I said to her, 'Why? If you had to bring them back at all, why did you not bring them back long since?'

Then the poor woman wept very much, and turned away her face from me, and after a long time she said to me,

'I am a Christian now.'

'A Christian?'

'Yes. I believe in Jesus; He died for me, and He has saved my soul.'

Then I said to her,

'What has this to do with bringing back my things?'

'Because,' she said, 'I could not love Jesus and be a thief.'

Then the poor woman was with me a long time, and she told me how much trouble she had passed through: how she had lost her only little son by death, and how in her trouble she had heard about Jesus from a holy man. If she had not brought back my things she would have been what the Christians call an impostor or hypocrite. Her faith would have been worthless. It might have been something in the head but was nothing in the heart, and Christians say that everything depends upon what the heart believes and loves.

You see by this that it is not so easy to believe but very hard, and that when men do really believe they have to prove their belief by doing things not easy to do.

When a man believes really and truly in Jesus Christ, he goes over all his past life, and if he has stolen anything he takes it to the man from whom he stole it, and when he has hurt anyone he tries to make it up by kindness, and if he does not do this, it is no matter what he says, Jesus will not have him as a disciple, and Jesus will not listen to his hymns, even if he was to sing as loudly as a high wind that shakes the trees. A man cannot sing to Jesus unless he believes in Jesus. Jesus only listens to songs of the heart. He cares nothing for fine words or for fine music, He cares only for the loving heart that seeks Him and cries for Him with all the passion of painful hunger and thirst.

I must tell you that Jesus is the only Son of God. You must fix your mind upon that point. Through this Son He will have many millions of sons, but

Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God.

You know that King Harichandra had no son though he had a hundred wives. You know that he prayed to Varuna for a son, and that he promised to sacrifice the child to Varuna, and you know how Harichandra lied. He received the son, but did not offer the sacrifice.

It was not so with the God of the Christians. He was born that He might die. He came into the world on purpose to die for sinners. He laid down His own life in love, and took it again in power. He might have saved His life, but He did not. If strong men had killed Him that would not have been a sacrifice; it would have been only a murder. Men now go to Jesus and ask Him to save their souls, and when their souls are saved they go out and work for Jesus. If they did not love

Jesus they would not want to work for Him, but when they love Jesus they cannot help working for Him. They do not work for Him because some one has told them to do so, they work for Him because their own hearts will not allow them to rest until they have tried to do good to others.

Men all over the world are more loved by Christians than by any other people. Other nations let men perish, but Christians try to save them. They go into all countries and learn all languages that they may tell all men about Jesus. They put themselves to very much trouble, and they give very much money, to make the dear name of Jesus known all over the world. If you ask them why they do it they always say, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' This is the way by which they know that they are true Christians,

not by what they say but by what they do. The Christian says he belongs to Jesus, and whatever Jesus tells him to do he says he must do it, however hard it is and cost what it may.

I want to say this over and over to you to get it well into your mind. That is how you may know a Christian, and that is how you may know how many are Christians, in name only and not in action. All trees are not fruit-trees, and if they pretend to be what they are not they are like false and worthless Christians.

(3.) A great man has told me that the life of Jesus Christ may be written in three words. And the same man told me that all we need know about God Himself can also be told in words only three in number. Is it not wonderful? Would you like to know what the three words are? I can

tell you. I got the great man to write them in my book and to sign his name. The book is called an album, and in it I am glad to get the names of good people who are kind enough to favour me with their signatures. The three words about God are—'God is love'; and the three words about Jesus are—'I have compassion.' Compassion and love mean very nearly the same thing; you may say God is love and Jesus is compassion, and Jesus once said, so that all the people round about Him could hear His words,—'I and My Father are one.' It was the same thing as if He had said love and compassion are one. Jesus did not say Father and I, as if His Father were better; He made Himself equal with God. The wonderful thing is that Jesus was one with man and one with God.

When it says that Jesus had compassion, it means that He pitied the people and

cared for them and always wanted to help them; He gave them bread and fish when they were hungry; when the people were sick He healed them; when His disciples were tired He bade them 'rest awhile.'

Once Jesus said the people were like sheep without a shepherd, and He wanted to be a Shepherd to them all. He was not satisfied to be a Shepherd of a few. As He died for the whole world, so He wished to be the Shepherd of the whole world. That is why His people loved Him.

He lived much in an old and beautiful city called Jerusalem. There He did many kind deeds, and there He spoke many tender words. But the city was not grateful. The people of Jerusalem never did care for great and good men; it stoned them and killed them. When His work was nearly done, Jesus came near the city, and whilst hot tears rolled down His

cheeks, He said, in a tone of great pity—'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.' He was full of sadness because the people had turned away from His kind teaching.

Jesus was killed at Jerusalem. All the rulers, and scribes, and great men hated Him and nailed Him to a cross. His death upon the cross is called His crucifixion. But about this you must read the holy books of the Christians. When anybody tells you anything about Jesus Christ be sure to read the books and always believe the books rather than the people. The books are always right. Read for yourself. Do not let anybody come between you and the books. This is what Jesus Christ Himself said. He wanted men to believe Him only on account of what He did and what His religion did. He said, 'Believe Me for the works' sake'; and He said, 'A tree is known by its fruit'; and He said, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'

Jesus rules by reason. He does not strike men blind and then tell people to follow Him; He opens their eyes and clears their minds, and then sweetly bids them follow Him. This is grand!

I think I can show you what this means if you remember what I told you about the policeman who spoke roughly to me when I first came to this country and inquired about the Christians. I have come to know the policeman, and he is much better than I once thought he was. I have been told something about his family life, and when you hear it I think you will see that it makes the influence of the religion of Jesus Christ very clear.

It appears that his youngest son had run away some years ago, and that by his bad life he had broken his mother's heart. The policeman told me this, and his eyes were filled with tears as he explained how

his dying wife had said on the very day she died,

'Mind, if Willie comes home, you treat him kindly, for my sake.'

When the policeman said this to me he turned away his head, and was in sore trouble. It takes a great deal to make so strong a man shed tears.

You may imagine how much he felt the death of his wife and all her sorrow, when I tell you that for a long time he was unable to speak another word. He was not crying about his son, but about his heart-broken wife. He was in great bitterness against his son. The pain the boy had given his mother prevented the father having any feeling of love for him.

A long time after this the policeman told me that holy men had been speaking to him about Jesus Christ, and made him a new man.

Now you will see what the religion of

Jesus Christ did for him. One evening I was in the policeman's house, and as we were talking together about the religion of Jesus a knock came to the back door, and who should be there—at his own father's back door—but Willie! The very Willie who had killed his own mother. When the men saw each other they were silent. I could almost see the sob that was in the father's throat. Willie was the first to speak; he hoarsely said—

'Father!' and the policeman said in a thrilling voice—

'My boy!'

When I left them I felt that 'Jesus Himself drew near.' This is how the religion of Jesus works. Nothing but the religion of Jesus could have brought these separated hearts together. If the policeman had not received Willie lovingly he would not have had the spirit of Jesus in his heart. 'If any man have not the

spirit of Jesus in his heart he is none of His.' Now, do you see what I mean by Jesus Christ calling upon the people standing around Him to believe Him for the works' sake?

Christians tell me that Jesus is always nearest when they need Him most. Almost everybody wants Jesus when there is trouble or death in the house, but He is not always asked to come to a wedding, or a dance, or a feast of wine, because the people then want to be gay, and to be admired for their finery. When there is a funeral it is very different. Then the people put away all their feathers, dress themselves in black robes, and shed many tears, and send for holy men to tell them about Jesus. And the wonderful thing is that Jesus never refuses to come. You would think He would say, 'No, you did not ask Me to your feast, so I will not

come to your funeral.' This is not at all the spirit of Jesus. 'When He was reviled, He reviled not again.' 'When He suffered, He threatened not.' That is the Jesus I want you to love, and I think if you do love Him you can give a good reason for doing so. Our love is but a return for His own love. The Christians say, 'We love Him because He first loved us.' Love is the reason of love. It is not the case of loving something that is very beautiful without being useful; it is the case of answering love by love, as a flower might be the answer of the earth to the warmth of the sun.

Jesus is the enemy of trouble. Jesus fights death, and they say that one day He will kill it, and that the time will come when no one will remember that anyone ever died. Jesus cannot rest until He has cleared away all sin, and all trouble, and pain and death. 'He must reign until He

has put all enemies under His feet.' In reality there is but one enemy, and the name of that black and dreadful foe is Sin.

I must tell you one thing Jesus did, and you will love Him. One day He was in a little town, and as He was walking about the streets He met people carrying away the dead body of a young man to be buried. The young man was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Was it not sad? What did Jesus do? He caused the people to stand still, and He touched the bier on which the dead body lay, and as He did so, He said, 'Young man, I say unto thee arise,' and the young man sat up, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. What a happy home it would be! How ghostly everything in that house would feel for a long time!

The young man had been in a place

that the Christians call Heaven. What had he seen? Had he seen God? Had he seen his own father? Had he seen how this poor little world looks from so great a distance? We cannot tell. What we can tell is that Jesus had a kind heart, and that He had more power than death. No man can raise the dead. But Jesus did this again and again, and because He did so He could not possibly have been a mere man. Then what was He? He had the power of God, so the Christians call Him the God-Man, 'God with us,' and one of His disciples called Him, 'My Lord and my God,' and Jesus did not rebuke him, which He must have done if the man had been wrong.

The Christians say that Jesus Christ is always using the words which he spoke as He stood beside the bier on which the dead body lay, 'Young man, I say unto thee arise.' Jesus never calls upon

people to go down; He calls upon them to arise from sin, from slavery, from error, from self-indulgence, from all things wrong. No man can be constantly with Jesus, or under the influence of Jesus, without 'rising' higher and higher, until he becomes a citizen in the beautiful city of God.

I feel that Jesus is not far from me. I think I could speak to Him, He is so near. I often speak to the breezes that are blowing towards the land of my birth; and along these invisible paths, or by the lips of these invisible messengers, I send messages to you all,—yes, messages in plain words, messages in my mother tongue, and I feel that you will get them all in one way or another. Do you call me foolish? I cannot be foolish to think that such loving words cannot be lost. It may take a long time for my messages to reach those whom I love, but I remem-

ber that it takes sometimes thousands upon thousands of years for the light of the stars to reach the earth. The air is full of poetry which somebody must have spoken. This is one of the ways in which I account for the happy influences that fall upon my life and make it rich with great blessings. Of all such things the heart is the best interpreter.

Since I have walked with Jesus and entered into His spirit, I feel how much better it is to live in a sensitive universe than to crumble away in a dead creation; to live in Jesus is to have all things made new day by day. Since I loved Jesus all the flowers are new, and all the birds, and all the little children are visible images of the unseen but watching angels.

III.

OTHER PEOPLE'S IMPRESSIONS.

I CANNOT write better English, but I do now understand many of the words much better. You know that the fruit of the vine—the beautiful purple grape—is not to be swallowed whole, but is to be first peeled and then crushed in the mouth. Plums are not to be swallowed stones and all. It is the same with words. You not only want to know a grape when you see one, and to be quite sure that it is a grape, you want to do much more than this—you want to taste it, and to taste it in the right way.

It is, I say, just the same with words. You may know a word as well as a grape,

and yet not taste it. You may know the word *Jesus*, and yet only know it by the outside, which means that you really do not know it at all. You may see a rose through a window, and never know that it is fragrant. It is the same with Jesus. You must live with Jesus if you would really know what He is.

People tell me that they judge a picture by living with it; they mean to say that they place it on their walls, and look at it from week to week, and if it grows upon them, and becomes almost necessary to them, it is to them, at all events, a good picture. No one can tell what love is; you must love to know love. So with Jesus, the true grape, the beautiful rose, the sweet, sweet, sweetest Heart, before you can truly know how deep and tender is His love. Before I do any important thing I now say, 'What would

Jesus do?' and the very asking of the question is itself an answer. When you know Jesus you know what He would like you to do. You need not puzzle your mind over it, because you are only silencing His voice in the heart and conscience. To Him who loves Jesus all things in life are made plain. To live with Jesus is to live with God. All that I have to do is to pay attention to the voice that is speaking within my heart, and I will soon get an answer to my true prayers. I must not speak my own voice, nor must I tell my heart what I want it to say, I must simply lie in the arms of Jesus like a little child and He will tell me what to do.

I have seen a man who is very angry with the Christians. He is a Turk—a very nice man to look at, his eyes are large and dark and full of a strange light,

and as for his voice it soothes and charms all who hear it. I think he is a most dangerous man, because you can never be quite sure as to his real meaning. When he looks at you he seems at the same time to look beyond you, as if he was watching another face in the far distance and taking signs from it as to what he ought to say. He hates the Christians, though he makes them think that he loves them very much.

A Christian asked the Turk to write his name in a book which is kept for the names of friends, and at once he took the pen and with much grace wrote in the book. The Christian was greatly pleased, so much pleased that he thanked the Turk over and over again and showed the writing to many Christians. They did not know the Turkish letters, and of course they could not read the name. But one day a holy missionary who had been long

in Turkey saw the book, and what do you think the Turk had written? The Turk had not written his own name at all: what he did write was this :—

'*Allah! Curse the infidel!*'

I told the Turk that the writing had been translated to the Christians, and I asked him why he had written so wicked a word when he was requested simply to write his name. He did not seem to be ashamed of what he had done. He said that I myself would have done the same if I had been treated in the same manner by the Christians, and I asked him how? He then put his hand into his pocket and drawing out a paper he said,

'This will explain to you, I think, something of my life amongst the English Christians.'

The account was written in English, and this is part of it :—

'This is a strange country, most certainly. Let me tell you something about the people. I go into the courts of justice, and who do you think is being tried? Not little ill-behaved boys, but solicitors, superintendents of police, chief inspectors, the very men who have been chosen to protect the country, and when they are sentenced they whine and cry like threatened hounds. Well, I say, you are indeed a nice people, just the very people to lecture poor Turkey.

'I go into the Stock Exchange, and I hear more lies told in one short winter's day than I could write down in a whole week in summer; the men are hatching reports, starting rumours, taking in the innocent, robbing the widow and orphan, and gambling all day long. When it suits them they praise my country, when it suits them they blame my country; money will turn the scale either way. So

I say, "You are a very nice people."

'Then I go into the church to see what is done there. It is very much like going into the Stock Exchange. The people there buy and sell livings. The livings are often disposed of by the auctioneers. If you bid five hundred pounds, and another man bids five hundred guineas, he will get the cure of souls, and you won't. The bishop speaks, and the clergyman contradicts him. The bishop brings him to the law, and the people give him a testimonial. Then I go again in the omnibus, and see "Beware of pickpockets," and I say, "Which? The big ones or the little ones?"

'Then, in this fine heaven of a most morally salubrious country, they have a chapel as well as a church. Chapel bites church, and church scratches chapel. The chapel minister must not preach in church, and the church minister must not

preach in chapel; but they meet one another at luncheons, and say they are overflowing with brotherly love, and hope to meet one another in a better land, perhaps meaning Turkey. Chapel is very queer, and church is very queer, so I go again in the omnibus, and I see "Beware of pickpockets," and I say, "I see now what you mean;" and I say to the omnibus man, "That is very strange; why do people have any pockets? If the people had no pockets they could not be picked." And the man calls a policeman to give me in charge on something which he calls suspicion; but the policeman is not there, so he shakes his fist at me, and calls me a Turk, and says something which is not like church, and lets me go.

'Then I go again among the courts, and husbands and wives are being divorced; directors are being charged with fraud; merchants are suing one another for

damages; Adam is sentenced to three weeks' imprisonment for kicking, smashing, and half killing Eve, and a little boy is sent to prison for six months for stealing a turnip; so I come out, and go in the omnibus, and see "Beware of pickpockets," but I say nothing.

'I hasten away to see the Prime Minister, and as I go along I ask a man where the Prime Minister lives, and the man says, "Beware of him; he has no principles; he has no conscience; he has no policy; he does not care what laws are passed, so long as he can keep his office and his pay; you go and see the man who was Prime Minister before him." So I go to see the ex-Premier, and another man says, "Beware of him; he has radicalism on the brain; he harasses all interests; he disestablishes churches; he approves of the eastward position," and much more the man says; and then I wonder why they do

not take them both up on suspicion. And then I remember that perhaps the policeman is never there when he is wanted; so, as I cannot see those very great ministers who spend their time in trying to strangle one another—

'I go to see the physicians and the surgeons and the doctors, and what do you think I find? I find church and chapel, and "Beware of pickpockets" over again. I just do find that, and nothing else, in this garden of the soul, this very holy England, that celebrates the birth of Christ by getting very much drunk. One doctor says bolus, and another says globule; Globule calls Bolus a butcher, and Bolus calls Globule a quack, and the hydropathist says, "Beware of pickpockets." And Bolus will not speak to Globule, though Globule says, "Let us make it up and begin again," and Bolus says, "Never, as long as I live I will

leech, and blister, and cup, and bleed, and do things with scientific vigour." And I say to myself, "Why are they not all taken up on suspicion?" And I say, "This is sweet Christian England."'

I was much confused when I read this account, for I knew at once that a good deal of it was likely to be quite true. Another Turk, much younger, but who had received similar treatment in England, also gave me some notes which he had made upon English life and manners. This Turk had written an account of his observations, and printed it, and from that printed account I quote the following:—

'He has hardly settled in his lodgings until he runs downstairs in the utmost eagerness in answer to a loud cry of "Turk! Turk!" but he finds to his amazement that the people are calling in

a large dog, and he returns to his room declaring that when he gets home he will have an enormous dog of his own and distinguish it by the name of "Christian." Every day in the week except Sunday he eats his meals in his own room; on Sunday he joins the happy circle on its tea-drinking way to chapel, and is entranced by the music of a harmonium purchased on the thirty years system of wearing a thing out and then denying you ever had it. He finds the cat a large institution in a Christian family. The cat eats his bacon; the cat runs away with his clothes; the cat drinks his milk; the cat makes away with his cheese; the cat upsets his brandy-bottle; and the cat looks none the better for it; it is lank, forlorn, consumptive, permanently engaged in nightly excursions upon the roofs of adjoining houses, and as permanently engaged in dozing before the fire all day.

He is about to suggest that the cat can be taken up on suspicion, but painful memories bring the suggestion to an untimely end. With a Turk for a dog, and a thief for a cat, he finds that a little amusement of some sort would help him through the long evenings, and be useful to him in many ways. The idea is good. This quiet little family often has a quiet little amusement in the way of dark *séances*, in which departed spirits pinch the ears and tap the heads of loving friends who have come together to sit in the dark and take whatever Providence may send them under the table. The Turk liked this. It touched his veneration and fancy, and might perhaps have made a Christian of him, had he not discovered the hand of a medium stealthily groping for the pocket where his money was; but he said nothing, and did nothing further than to thrust a pin into the

thievish hand, which made the medium say that there was one unbeliever present, and that the spirits were angry, and mischief might follow if they did not light the gas and quiet the air by playing the harmonium. The Turk asked what an "unbeliever" was, and was giggled at as very ignorant; and when he quoted the eleventh commandment, "Beware of pickpockets," the people said they did not see what he was driving at, and the quiet little party broke up in confusion; and soon after the Turk, worn out by the incorrigible cat, changed his quarters, and drew a moral from the instructive past.'

When he had gone Maria confessed that she had taken two bottles of pomatum, but she always understood there was no harm in taking things from a Turk. Bertha owned that she had taken three bottles of scent, which she would not have taken if

she had not thought that very likely he got it for next to nothing on account of its coming from 'somewhere foreign.' And the youngest son acknowledged that he had taken two handkerchiefs on the same understanding—viz., that Turkey handkerchiefs cost nothing, and he had taken them more by way of curiosity than anything else; but he wanted none of the Turk's handkerchiefs, and he wished he had never seen them—a statement which owed its truthfulness largely to the fact that a washerwoman had stolen them from him, and he had nothing to show for his cleverness in taking in the Turk.

I told you there are bad Christians, and I have also told you that there are good Christians. I think it right to let you know what these Turks thought of the English. It is no use to shut our eyes against facts. I may tell you that the

Bible itself never conceals the faults of those who profess to love God. This is very wonderful to me. The Bible gives you both sides of man's character. It does not paint pretty pictures; it faithfully describes men and things just as they are. This is what I have tried to do in giving you some account of my life among the Christians.

When a man speaks ungrammatically, do you blame the grammar of the language which he abuses? Do you say what a very bad language this is, because this man speaks it so badly? Do you not rather say the language itself is right, but this man does not know how to speak it? That is just what you should do when you are face to face with men who call themselves Christians and speak the language of their faith very badly. Blame the speaker, not the religion. When you meet a man with

a broken leg, do you think that all his fellow-countrymen are lame? You do nothing of the kind. Then why think that because you have met one lame Christian that all Christians are unable to walk?

You remember the man who lived next door to you when you were a little boy at home? I remember him well. How that poor man stammered! How painful it was to hear him! You know how ill-behaved children used to mock him, and thus give him pain. Because that man stammered so distressingly, did you ever think of calling all your neighbours stammerers? That is just what I wish you to do when you think about the Christians. Some of them do stammer in a most painful manner; but I should be unjust if I did not tell you that many of them speak with fluency and eloquence.

IV.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

I ASKED one of the true Christians about the bad ones, and he told me that he had seen a good many of them, and had written an account which he would like me to read. This was his story:—

John Armstrong is the very man to help me in my mission amongst the poor. What John's personal record is I am not quite at liberty to tell at this moment; perhaps it may appear little by little, for his experience was really the secret of his success as a social labourer. One of

John's favourite mottoes was, that every man must be fought with his own weapons if you were really to triumph over him along the whole line of his personal peculiarities. Many a time I have ventured to call John's attention to very sublime principles, but I grieve for my own sake to say that John invariably preferred his own mottoes.

John was immensely assisted in nearly every department of his work by a very peculiar gift of disguise and impersonation. In my own mind—a secret which I never breathed to him—John's name was David Garrick. It is, of course, expected that in working out schemes of Christian benevolence there must be a certain percentage of fraud on the part of the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries themselves never regarded their policy as being fraudulent; to their peculiar minds their action was simply a display of superior tactics.

John was visiting missionary. He was not content to give the people tea and buns at a public table, he made a point of visiting the people at their homes and entering unaffectedly and helpfully into their daily life. I have never seen an instance in which this house-to-house work was regarded other than favourably by the people. John's simple, frank, cheery manner opened all doors because it first opened all hearts.

One of the nightly attendants at our Social Club told John that a visitor had called upon him and tried to lure him away from the mission, but that the visitor had been repulsed with heavy loss.

'He was a mean, sneaking fellow,' said Sam Wardling, the man in question, 'but he got the wrong man by the nose when he laid hands on me.'

'What did he say, Sam, and what was his business altogether?

'He asked me if I didn't think that the mission was conducted on wrong principles, and I told him that they were principles that suited me very well and lots of other fellows, and I thought the best thing he could do was to clear out and not try to come it over me.'

'Then you didn't form a good opinion of your visitor?'

'I told him that I didn't want anybody to interfere with our work, and that if he wanted to be told the truth about it, he had better see my wife and she would let him know her mind without taking a long time to do it in.'

'The man didn't say anything to you about giving you money, did he?'

'Money was named, but I told him that he had come to the wrong man if he wanted to buy me off with such stuff.'

'You didn't give him a hint that your

wife might be disposed to look kindly on half-a-crown ?'

'Never !' said Sam, assuming an air of incorruptibleness in the matter of bribery.

'I may as well tell you, Sam, that I have seen the man, and he gave me a very different account of his interview with you !'

'Then he is exactly the liar which I took him to be,' Sam definitely replied.

'Well,' said Armstrong, 'it is perfectly clear to me that if he is not a liar you are one, and that if you are not a liar he is big enough for seven at least.'

Sam declared that he would be glad to meet the man face to face in Armstrong's presence, and Armstrong should judge which was the truthful man.

'That is the way, Sam ! But before we go into the matter let me clearly understand the exact position of things. You mean to say that you spoke well of the

club, that you refused the half-a-crown, and that you as good as ordered the man out of your house?'

'That is exactly how the thing stands, and the sooner I meet the rogue the better.'

'He did not offer you two or three railway-tickets for an excursion into the country, did he? on the understanding that you would leave our club and join one he himself was getting up?'

'If he had done that I would have chucked him and his tickets out of the window.'

'Then you are prepared to go with us on our annual trip into the country on the fourteenth of this month?'

'Certainly.'

'Will your wife and three children go with you if we can find room for you all?'

'On that you may make up your mind,' said Sam.

'Our trip is on the fourteenth, and that other man offered you tickets for the nineteenth?'

'Just so.'

'And you refused them point-blank?'

'Point-blank,' said Sam.

'What was the man like?'

'A mean, greasy little hypocrite. He was not more than five feet six in height, and I think he would not have objected to smoke a pipe with me, if I had been fool enough to invite him.'

John Armstrong then made a little speech denouncing hypocrisy, and Sam applauded every word of it by beating a little table with his knuckles. Armstrong had often told me that he suspected the sincerity of Sam Wardling, although he had no positive evidence of Sam's hypocrisy. Armstrong had made up his mind to put

Wardling to the test, and now he saw that the opportunity was put into his hands.

'If I find the man out and bring him to my house, will you face him in my presence? I think you know, Sam, that this wheedling kind of game ought to be exposed and put down, and we are the men to manage it if you will be faithful to me.'

'That I will,' said Sam.

It was agreed that when Armstrong was ready he would send Wardling word to that effect, and it was further agreed that Wardling would come along at once and take up the cudgels on behalf of the club he loved so well. John Armstrong lived quite near to the club, so that Wardling had no difficulty in finding his house. Nor had Armstrong any difficulty in finding the man who had waited upon Wardling and sought to bring him over to a new association.

Armstrong took a week in which to make his arrangements, meeting Wardling from time to time at the club, and signifying to him that the whole arrangement was in process, and might be carried into effect almost at any hour. The precise hour arrived, and the seducer awaited Wardling in the little parlour of my chief missionary. The moment Wardling entered the room he shook hands with the stranger and told him that if he used him well and took the cue from his face Sam would make it all right with him.

'Very well,' said the seducer, 'my name is Arthur Pitlock, and you may rely on my confidence. We must work together in this business. When you want me to say "No" to anything just raise your left eyebrow, and when you want me to say "Yes" close both your eyes and keep them shut until I have time to count three. It is all very well,

you know, but these fellows want to make money out of the working-classes, whereas at our club we want to put money into their pockets;—all in an honourable way, you know, and all above board after a given point, but up to that point we shall have to be as cautious as a tom-cat when he is walking along a wall covered with sharp glass. If this man was a real gentleman, do you think he would keep us waiting here so long?'

'I am beginning to wonder,' said Sam, 'what can be keeping him; do you think he can be giving us the slip?'

'I have my suspicions about the business, and with your consent I will leave you here for two or three moments whilst I go out to see how matters stand.'

Arthur Pitlock accordingly went out, and had not been gone certainly for more than one minute when in walked the faithful Armstrong.

'Ha! Then he has not come; don't you think this looks suspicious?'

'Oh!' replied Sam, 'he has been here, and he has gone out on a pretence to seek for you, because he wondered why you were wasting his time by not keeping your appointment.'

'Then you are quite sure, Sam, that you will face this man and tell him exactly what you told me?'

'Every word of it. I am here to speak the truth, and it is not a man like this who is going to gag me.'

'Then I may depend on you?'

'To the death.'

'You see, Sam, that ours was the first club in this neighbourhood, and it is not fair on the part of anybody to come here and try to trip us up. Why, even a crossing-sweeper would not allow himself to be displaced by another crossing-sweeper without, at all events, protesting against

it. Was this man dressed like a clergyman?'

'He had a white choker on, if that is what you mean?'

'Does he wear spectacles?'

'Not exactly spectacles, but he puts glasses up to his eyes.'

'I suppose it is no use my going after him, or we may be fooling away your time by the one coming and the other going, and our never getting together. Sam, tell me in one word—are you an honest man?'

'As honest as the day is light, or I would not stand by you, whatever the weather is. The fellow may come in this moment and say what he likes, and you will see that I will down him with a stroke.'

'Of course, you don't mean by downing him to use any violence, because that is a thing I must protest against everywhere,

but especially in my own house. Just look at these pictures in this album, and I will be back again long before you have got through the portraits.'

This was hardly true, for instead of Armstrong appearing, Arthur Pitlock came back looking annoyed, because Armstrong was not in the room.

'This is a hoax,' said he; 'but does it not clearly show you what queer hands we are in, and how careful we must be in playing our cards? One thing is certain, I must give you half-a-crown just to show that I am well disposed to you, and willing to help you if you will help me.'

Having said this Arthur Pitlock disappeared, but in less than three minutes John Armstrong re-entered the room, and taking off a muffler, he asked if Pitlock's white choker was anything like this, and Sam declared that it seemed to him to be the very choker itself. Armstrong then

put on a pair of eye-glasses, and asked Wardling whether they reminded him of those worn by Pitlock, and Sam declared that he must have borrowed them, for they were the very same that were on the nose of the other man. Armstrong's next move was to give his hair a little switch with a pocket-comb, asking Wardling at the same time if Pitlock was anything like that? The fashion of Wardling's face changed.

'Why, that beats Satan himself! Pitlock will not know you when he comes back. You have made up exactly like him; in fact, I could not tell the one from the other.'

'You would be a clever fellow, Sam, if you could. Did the man give you any money to-night?'

'Not a penny, or I would have thrown it at him. I didn't come into your house to be insulted. I tell you I am as

true as steel, and the darker the night, the more you may depend upon my protection.'

When Sam realised that he had been talking to John Armstrong all the time without knowing it, I need not describe his shame and confusion of face.

I do not know whether you will understand all the words in this story, for there are some of them which are quite strange to myself. But you will make out its meaning, and see how true it is that there are bad Christians as well as good ones. Sam Wardling was one of the worst, and there are many not much better than he was, and yet for all that Jesus Christ Himself remains the same in beauty and grace and tenderness. You have to do with Jesus Christ, and not with the people who steal His name and trade upon it. When I took the story back to the holy man who had lent it to me, he seemed to

think that it might have made a bad impression upon my mind, so he said,

'Are you not afraid to become a Christian?'

I said,

'Why should I?'

'Why, see how badly Wardling turned out!'

'Yes,' I replied, 'but see how well Armstrong turned out; the night is dark, but the day is bright; why should I turn away from the day because of the blackness of the night?'

'Quite true. Your way of looking at the thing is the only right way. There is windy weather and wet weather, and fine weather and hot weather and cold weather; but these differences need not compel us to keep our shutters up all the year round.'

And then I told the holy man that there was something more likely to make me

afraid of becoming a Christian, and that he had without knowing it touched the very point of my difficulty. What he had said about the weather applied to the differences amongst the Christians. Some are high church, and some are low church, and some are broad church, and some are Presbyterians, or Congregationalists, or Baptists, or Methodists; now, said I,

'How is it possible that they can all be right?'

'Oh, yes,' said he, 'they are all right.'

'Why,' said I, 'how can you make that out? Can men differ from one another, and yet be agreed?'

'What would you think if I said I would never cover my head whatever the weather may be, simply because there are so many differences between hats? There are silk hats, and felt hats, and opera hats, and straw hats, and hunting hats; and as there are so many of them, I do not think

I will choose any. What would you think? And the same thing holds good about boots. There are top boots, and Wellington boots, and fishing boots, and dress boots; and as there is so much difference amongst them, I do not think I will wear any boots at all. What would you think?'

He then told me that the unity of Christians was in the root from which they sprang, and not in the thickness and length and variety of the branches and twigs. All true Christians are one in Christ. All true builders are one in geometry, though not in architecture. All doctors are one in their desire to heal, though not in the methods and processes which they adopt. All people are agreed that the body must be supported by suitable food, but no man would endeavour to reconcile all the menus which can be found upon the dining-tables of the world.

He told me that God had made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth, and that some men were strong and others weak, some were architects and some were poets, some were philosophers and some were fools, and the differences went so far that some men were black and other men were white; yet human nature was one in everything essential, and distinctive, and incommunicable.

I like the Christians, because when they speak about one another they do not expect to find perfection. If you were to tell them of their faults, they would answer that those faults did not come from their Christianity, but from their want of it. They call no man Master upon the earth. But when you are perplexed by their inconsistencies and deficiencies they seem to say, 'Look at the Master and not at the servant.' This is a strong argument.

It is strong because it is reasonable. And I have so far found that, through and through, the religion of Jesus Christ is founded upon reason and probability.

V.

THE MINISTRY OF TROUBLE.

You have made my heart sad by the news that your darling Musha is dead. For your sake, not for his, my tears flowed in a hot stream. Musha, of course, was little more to me personally than a smile, a kiss, and a gurgle of happy laughter; but to you he was life and hope, and heavens beyond imagination.

How I wish you knew Jesus in this your day of loss and bitterness. Jesus would heal your heart and turn your loss into gain, and in His own way He would make dear Musha more than ever yours. Jesus says that in heaven the angels of

the children always look upon the face of their Father. How beautiful! how comforting to the desolated heart!

Every little one is watched by an angel of his own. The angels spend their time with the child, and go to heaven to report how the child is living and growing upon earth. The angels themselves are bright children of God, and it is delightful to think how they spend so much of their time in watching and helping the lives of all human creatures. The angels make summer in winter. There is a flower that grows best in the snow,—surely it must have been brought from the skies by the angels to show cold winter that even the ice is under the power of God.

We need voices of song in the nighttime. God must be very near us when we cannot help ourselves, as is the case

when we are in deep sleep. The Bible says that God giveth to His beloved sleep. That is a very beautiful saying when you come to understand what it means. It means that God is working for His beloved even when they are asleep. He is getting the morning ready for them. When they awake they will see light, and pearly dew, and they will hear the voices of birds singing their wordless songs. Even so with the sleep of death. God giveth to His beloved in that last deep sleep. He is making ready heaven upon heaven, and joy upon joy, and no fancy, however bright and strong, can imagine the things which God has prepared and is preparing for them that love Him.

I believe that Musha is with Jesus. When Jesus said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God!'

He did not shut out any little one from the summer of His love.

Do you think that Jesus cares for the little children of one country only? If He sends His sunshine and His rain upon the whole world, will His love be less than the gifts of nature? Jesus is Lord of India because He is Lord of the whole earth. A lamp is local; the sun is universal. It is just the same with Jesus, Who is the light of the world. This is the name by which He called Himself: He said, 'I am the light of the world,' and the world is not one little place but all places, wherever there is a man to be saved and blessed.

I want you to think of Musha as a little angel for ever, free from pain and tears and death. Do not think that he is a mere clod of the earth, and do not think that he is an indistinguishable part of some infinite quantity. Think of him as

living, growing, singing, and as watching you and perhaps bringing to you something every day from the gardens of God.

I wish you could have seen a poor woman whom I know well, who lost her only little girl; I wish you could see how sweetly and even gratefully she took the breaking of her heart: 'Jesus breaks my heart that He may make it whole again with all the evil taken out of it.'

For a time she was in great heaviness of spirit, and her knees smote each other in weakness, when the world seemed so empty and her house so gaunt and cold. The poor woman told me that Jesus was never so precious to her as when she planted the body of the little child-flower in God's silent acre.

She is a very wonderful woman, having a kind of second sight, by which she sees more things than can be seen by common

eyes. I know her well, and I know her sincerity, and I know her simplicity of heart. I never heard anyone talk as she talks, for she seems to live with Jesus; and when she comes from His presence to join us in our common life, it seems as if she had just come from a garden of roses. She told me that in the very agony of her sorrow she had actually seen Jesus.

'I went and told Jesus all my trouble, and He did not rebuke me, though the tears fell fast from my eyes, and my voice was choked with grief. None,' said she, 'can listen like Jesus.'

She told me what she had said to the Son of God:

'Master, I would speak to Thee of my own little lamb, my clinging, charming, immortal Christine. I called her by Thy name, because I thought it would please Thee, and because I was sure of Thy coming, though invisably, to see how Thy

sweet pet was nestling in her mother's breast . . . Her cheek paled and her eye dimmed, and at break of day, as the first white clouds glimmered in the east, she passed from the arms of our love.'

'And Jesus said, "Let the little one come unto Me."

'I told him the house was dark, and even the air of the summer was cold as death, and our daily bread was daily bitterness. And still He said, "Let the little ones come unto Me."

'I then told the dear Jesus that when Christine was taken away there was no light in the sun, nor did any life breathe in the wind, and the very grass seemed to wither under our feet. And Jesus answered, "Thy child doth live: she doth behold the face of My Father which is in heaven: she will be for ever near thee as thy special angel."

'As I was moving away from Jesus He said, "Sorrow may endure for a night,

but joy cometh in the morning: Blessed are the dead that die in My name, for they find rest in God, and they shall be young with the life of heaven!" '

The poor woman said she could give me no idea of the tenderness of the Saviour's voice; and then she added,

'The kingdom of heaven is as a well in the wilderness.'

Let me beseech you to study the life of Jesus. You will be shocked when you come to know that the religious people of His own day hated and despised the Son of God. They said, 'This man is but a carpenter, and the son of a carpenter, no Hillel or Shammai hath taught Him letters, Hyrkanus doth despise Him, and in the Sanhedrim His name is cast out.'

Even the religious men found fault with the very place where Jesus lived as a child

and a working-man. They said, 'This man is of Nazareth, a name not found in our Scriptures, and Ben Ezra saith the name is not found among the writings of the Gentiles.'

The men despised poor Nazareth, and spake of it in many bitter words. They said to one another, 'Nazareth hath its one fountain, poorly adorned with a handful of olives. Remember ye not how Isaachar of Mount Tabor did visit the village to find the house of this hare-brained carpenter, and how poor was the hut in which Jesus was nurtured. Why, the reputed father and mother of this upstart teacher lived in the lowliest circumstances. Isaachar saw Mary driving forth the one lamb that made up their great flock. No man-servant or maid-servant was to be found within the house of Joseph and Mary.

'God Himself hath shut up the village in natural obscurity. God hath girdled

Nazareth with hills as with prison walls, and set it amongst glens and ravines that no man careth to penetrate. Yet this man claims to be the King of the Jews.' And when they had said this, they gnashed on Jesus with their teeth.

You must not be frightened by these shameful prejudices on the part of the men called Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus Christ called them to a higher righteousness, and this call they were unwilling to obey. Jesus Christ never failed to magnify Himself in the hearing of those who despised Him. When they said, 'Thou art of Nazareth, and no prophet ariseth in Galilee;' Jesus answered, 'Have ye never read that the high ones of stature shall be hewn down and the haughty shall be humbled? Know ye not that there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of His roots. Babylon shall fade like the cedar which hath no

sucker, but the house of David shall be as the oak whose root is full of life.'

You must not be turned aside from your deep study of Jesus by what the mocking men said about Him. They did not understand Jesus; no wonder that they first took up stones to stone Him, and that in the end they cried, 'Away with Him! crucify Him! crucify Him!'

Since writing this I have been in deep conversation with one of the oldest and best teachers of the Christian religion. He is the sort of man who ought to be a teacher, for he wishes his pupils to ask him whatever questions are giving them trouble of mind. He plainly tells those whom he teaches that he cannot answer all questions, for if he could he would be God rather than man; but he encourages them to tell everything that is in

their minds and hearts, and then he does the best in his power to give them information and guidance.

I asked him whether the Christian religion could say anything better than the law which was laid down by the Lord Buddha, which is, 'Overcome anger by love, falsehood by truth, evil by good'? The venerable teacher said the Lord Buddha took that law at the lips of Jesus.

Before Buddha was, Jesus was. He said that I must not think that Jesus was only in the world during His personal and visible ministry. The teacher told me that Jesus Christ was in the world as an inspiration from the very beginning of the human race.

I then told the teacher our wonderful story of Sayid, which is now published in English books. I told him that Sayid was an Arab of the hills, and Ishâk pledged his life that Sayid-bin-Tayf would keep his bond and return to die if the

Lord Sawa would let Sayid go home to see his first-born.

When Sayid had gone men mocked Ishâk, telling him that Sayid would never return. When he heard this Ishâk smiled and said, 'He is a Muslim, he will come,' but the time was almost gone and the promise had not been kept. Ishâk was ordered at sunset to stand before the black swordsman and to be smitten down instead of Sayid who had failed to come. Before the cleaving blow was struck a white mare sprang before the royal tent, and the faithful Sayid leaped from the reeking saddle, saying, 'I am here.'

Ibn Sawa, Lord of Bahrein, wondered at the deed, and asked the reason of such astounding faithfulness; and Ishâk answered the Lord Sawa that the law was written in the books of faith. I then asked the Christian teacher whether Christianity could produce an instance of more unselfish and heroic faithfulness?

The teacher was not abashed by the inquiry. He instantly answered, 'Jesus Christ died for the Sayid, who did *not* return! Not for the faithful, but for the faithless did He stand surety. Jesus died that the unreturning Sayid might live and be forgiven. In His sorrow there was none with Him. He died the just for the unjust. He was wounded for men's transgressions and bruised for men's iniquities. This is the difference between Jesus Christ and all other men who have in various ways attempted to save the world.'

That was the answer of the teacher. I think it lofty in sentiment, and we know it to be true in history. The teacher was not a narrow-minded man. He spake great things about the person and work of Jesus Christ. He told me that the Chinese, and the Red Indian, and the dreaming Hindu, all belonged to Christ, and were loved by

Him. He said that the Aryan and his Veda hymns were but alphabetic truth, and that the full truth was alone in Himself,—'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'

When the people heard these great words spoken by Jesus Christ they wept for joy, saying that they had found the Mother-Heart that heals and warms the world.

Jesus always gave credit to teachers who had endeavoured to lead them upward towards light and pureness. He excelled all other men. He seemed to say, 'Whether is greater, the man who offers a flower to hunger, or the man who offers it bread? Is a painted harvest, glowing with the fairest colours of art, equal to the golden corn waiting for the reaper's sickle? Which is greater, the people who have sought the Father, or I who have revealed Him? Buddha went from the lower that he might find the higher. I came down from the higher that I might lift up the lower.

Other men spake of their own nation, but I spake to the world—yea, to every man in the tongue wherein he was born.'

There is a wonderful teacher in this country who is now calling down upon himself the curses of all bad Christians, because he exposes their wrong-doing and their hypocrisy. Here is part of one of his exciting discourses :—

'The days have come when men bring robbery as an offering to God, and the wages of sin as a sop to the anger of heaven. The merchant acquires wealth by over-sizing his cotton, and selling it to the unsuspecting heathen. Men laugh at their own knavery, and compound with their consciences by sending a missionary to the heathen. A fire from heaven shall smite them, and the house of their pride shall crumble to dust. Men who are sow-

ing desolation in the land, and mourning it with the moan of hypocrisy; killing the father and offering charity to his orphan; they bring the name of Jesus into ill-repute, and cover His cross with shame. The wind shall rend their excuses, and their sleep shall be tormented by reproachful dreams. Woe unto the house of hypocrisy, and the palace of gain ill-gotten!'

This man, I told you, is unpopular. He is described by some Christians as rough, violent, and mad. Some Christians do not like the truth to be thus spoken, but I believe it is just what Jesus Christ Himself would have said if He had been living amongst men to-day. Jesus Christ could, of course, talk in another strain, and often He did so, to the great comfort and joy of those who faithfully endeavoured to live within His holy law.

I seem to hear Jesus Christ, in His very

tenderest moods, speaking to the sons of men words of cheer, and almost singing them out of their depression and distress.

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto the sunlight, killing the bacilli which prey upon the finest tissues of the body. Jesus Christ says to my heart, and to every heart that would follow Him—God is light. Walk in the light, and its violet rays shall kill the enemies of the soul. He that liveth in light liveth in health. Bathe your flesh in sunshine, and bathe your soul in the light of truth and love.

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a wind that bloweth in from the sea and cometh through forests of pine. As the wind is laden with health, so the breezes of the Spirit make glad the innermost life of man. The kingdom of heaven is like the coming of a delivering army to

dungeons filled with despairing captives: they hear the trumpet afar off, and are filled with gladness.

'The kingdom of heaven is like the morning whose brightness scatters the creatures that delight in darkness; they flee from it because they are afraid; they hasten to their holes and their caves, and hide themselves from the glory of advancing light.'

Of course, these words are my own, and yet they are not my own, for the truth of Jesus comes into my heart and speaks its own sweet words through the medium of my lips. Do you not think Jesus more wonderful than any teacher you ever heard of? He takes up everything that is lovely and beautiful in the sacred books of all people, and then He carries these things to their very highest meaning, and their most redeeming and comforting application.

In writing this to you I am not forgetting your ascended Musha. I cannot but think that in thus writing I may be drawing your mind away from its own sorrow, and taking it to the upper fountains of true healing and renewal. Do not look at the little earth: lift up your eyes and behold the infinite sky. Do not look into the deep dark grave, but look away to the radiant skies which are a continual revelation of the glory and beauty of God.

Musha is as a lamb, following the true Shepherd. He will not return to you, but you will go to him, and in the light of heaven's morning you will see the meaning of the darkness, and trouble, and pain which enter so largely into the lives of men who are still tarrying amid these earthly scenes.

VI.

AN ACCUSING VOICE.

You want to hear more of the preaching of the unpopular man whose words I set you, so I copied for you a discourse which I heard him deliver. He was speaking in the great City of London, and his voice sounded as a storm. The Christians will not let him into their holy places, because they say he was not 'regularly trained' for the pulpit. What they mean I do not know, but I do know that his discourses have a wonderful effect as he preaches in the open air to the great throngs that gather around him. This is his fiery speech:—

'Oh, London, that sinnest above all the cities of the world, God will judge thee, and in a furnace heated sevenfold will He burn thy corruptions. Thou art full of blood. Thine iniquities darken the sky of summer, and thy blasphemies do shame the spotless heavens. Thy morning drunkenness and thy twilight lust make the dawn and the gloaming afraid, for they remember the fate of Sodom and the stench and the brimstone that glutted Gomorrah.

'Oh, London, metropolis of the world, city of millions that have spurned the Christ, thy hidden places are the habitations of cruelty, thy warehouses are established and perfected in the burglary of gambling. London! City of renown, city of infamy, the curse of God shall come suddenly upon thee, and His lightning shall lay thy palaces in the dust; for thine iniquity standeth up as an heap, and thy shame burneth as an oven.

'Hast thou not spread a velvet covering over adultery, and offered a bribe to seal the tongue of accusation? In many a garret and many a cellar are there not cruel men who beat womanhood with fists of iron and doom little children to starvation? Wilt thou not cast them out of the midst of thee, and lay on them the stripes of a just laceration?

'Are not thy churches the meeting-places of hypocrisy, where knaves take up the language of saints and false men speak the testimony of outraged and protesting truth? I am against thee, saith the Lord, thy wickedness is not to be borne, thy sin must be consumed with fire.

'Yet is Mine heart turned towards thee, saith the Lord, for I remember that even in this city are ten men who save it, ten houses that hold back the fire of My

wrath. I remember thy honest men, and forbear. I hear the voice of prayer, and hold Mine hand.

'Oh, that thou wouldst turn unto the Lord with steadfastness of heart, for then would He increase thy greatness and cause thine enemies to flee away. Close thy drunkeries, abolish thy brothels, burn down thy gambling-houses, and the Lord will have mercy upon thee, yea, He will abundantly pardon.

'Oh, London, London, how often would Christ have gathered thee as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and thou wouldst not! Many a promise hast thou made thy Lord, but thy vows lie broken and violated on the very steps of His throne. I call thee to repentance, for the time shortens, and perdition moves towards thee with fatal steps. Bestir

yourselves, take hold upon the altar mightily, and give yourselves no rest until London shall cry unto Christ for pity, and humble itself at the foot of the Cross.'

Though this preacher uses so largely words of accusation and deeply-cutting reproach, yet he is most gentle, and he is most charitable. He represents Jesus Christ as loving all men, and stooping to accept their views of truth, however poor and elementary or even perverted those views are. When I asked the unpopular preacher to tell me what he thought Jesus Christ would say to the men whom He sent to preach His Gospel, he wrote me the following answer. You will see that he imagines the words in which Jesus Christ would address all His servants who are about to preach the Gospel to every creature. This is what Jesus Christ would say:—

'When the Mangain tells you that the universe is as the hollow of an infinite cocoanut shell despise him not, for his very notion of size is the beginning of a religion. When ye find the Hottentot worshipping the father of mischief and offering sacrifices to him, remember that behind all sacrifice lies the great mystery of the death from which I have now returned. When the Creek Indians tell you of the Master of Breath and of the sorcerer inhabiting briary swamps, listen to him with living interest, and thus win his confidence. When ye visit the Vedahs, the Todas, the Badogas, and the Santals, do not suppose ye can get all to think in the same way or to come to Me along one obvious path. Do not confound the Buddhist with the Laplander and talk to them as equals. Neither speak to any two men as equals, but discern wisely between the one and the other. Know that

each man hath a speech of his own, and be patient with the slow and timid.

'Again I say unto you, "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Lapland and Africa will receive you differently. Polynesia and Egypt will not receive My Gospel in the same way. The sun works more wonders in the tropics than amid the ice of northern seas, yet it is the same sun and the same earth.

'Be not afraid of persecution nor of death, for your Father knoweth all things, and will bring His word to pass. Prove your doctrines by your character. Be so unselfish, so charitable, so forgiving, and altogether so beautiful in holiness, that men cannot account for your conduct, except by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. Behold I send Him upon you, and He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you. He shall not speak of Himself; He shall

take of the things that are Mine, and show you things that are coming, and He will comfort you in all your discipline.

'Hereafter ye shall see Me no more in the flesh, but I am not therefore the less with you. I will pray the Father for you, and be your priest until the end of the appointed days. Your prayers I will offer to the Father, and your care shall be the welcome burden of My heart. It is expedient for you that I go away. My peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'

And as He showed them His hands and His feet, He vanished out of their sight.

I see the meaning of the kingdom of heaven more clearly now. If you were to ask me how I would put it into words I would say: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a great summer rain upon fields fail-

ing for thirst. The kingdom of earth and time is as a field from which the hidden pearl has been removed. The kingdom of heaven is as music in the vernal air, sung without money and without price. The kingdom of earth and time is as a groan which cannot express all its own desires. The kingdom of heaven is as a billow of life, coursing through all the channels of the soul. The kingdom of earth and time is as a thick icicle chilling the air and forbidding the flowers to bloom.

Oh, that men were wise, and that they would take Christ's offered rest. The kingdom of heaven is as the rich eloquence of inspired love. The kingdom of earth and time is as the dumb consonant awaiting the music-making vowel.

I think of Jesus as one loving heart might think of another, and in language

appropriate to that mutual love I often say: 'O my Christ, sweet Son of Mary, darling of the Father, be nearer to me than I can ever be to myself.'

Christ says He will take up His abode with me. Does He mean to make my heart His home? The chamber will be cleansed by His blood and made glorious by His smile. When He is so near I can whisper to Him; we can speak to one another in the crowd; we can breathe our love so softly as not to ruffle the midnight stillness.

I know my sweet Lord is very near, because of a love so pure that it longs to save the world. This great love helps me to understand Calvary. It is the Divine background of the Cross, it is the mother-force that accounts for all other love.

Saviour, help me to live the Cross. Save me from saying anything Thou hast not told me to say. Help me to say even

the hardest things in a spirit that will increase their effect by its very gentleness.

Oh, for more of the love-spirit! It will recover the earth from waste, and cast out the demon of despair. But is not love the blossom of purity? First, then, make me pure; yea, make me holy, after the mode of Thine own holiness, thou Son of man, then shall I love others with Thine own love.

Make my speech, I pray Thee, wise and quiet, because of its very strength. May my voice be but the medium of the Spirit. Even if it should please Thee to make me use words whose meaning I know not, Thy will be done.

In the day of trouble hide me in Thy pavilion. No storm can break through its infinite roof. Help me to forgive all my enemies. The archers have sorely shot at me; and in the forest I have been grieved with thorns. But the Lord has comforted me,

and the Wounded One has bathed my bruises with the balm of His love. I will hope in God. The blessing of the Three-One be evermore my joy.

Our life and thoughts are made poor when we put Christ from us as One who taught men in the far-off past. He is with us now. He is in the light. He walks the earth. He breathes the air. With us all day, all night, in youth and age, in grief and joy. This day's song and smile. Superstition puts him away amongst time's oldest shades. Reverence sees Him here and now, and waits to hear Him speak.

We have no dead Christ. Where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst of them. 'In the midst!' That is wonderful. He was always 'in the midst.' Not in the middle as a local point; but 'in the midst,' like light, like fragrance, like love.

Joseph and Mary found Him 'in the midst of the doctors.' He is still there,—'in the midst' of the scholars, doctors, authors, leaders; still at the well-head of thought. The age must have its Christ. He was, He is 'the infant,' 'the child Jesus,' 'the boy Jesus,' 'the man Jesus,'—that is His humanity.

'In the midst,'—always there—'they crucified Him and two others with Him, and Jesus in the midst.' In the midst of the thieves,—He is still there. It is His sovereign place. In the midst of the doctors, and in the midst of the thieves. In the temple and the slums,—that is His brotherhood. 'In the midst,'—still there,—there by right.

'I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man.' Where was He? 'In the midst'—in the midst of the doctors, in the midst of the thieves, in the

midst of the Churches,—that is His sovereignty. 'In the midst of the elders stood a lamb as it had been slain.' Where was He? 'In the midst.'

Think of it, in the midst of the doctors, in the midst of the thieves, in the midst of the Churches, in the midst of the elders! That is His fulness. 'In the midst'—a light, a fragrance, a persuasive personality. 'The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them.' Where is He? 'In the midst!' still there! There by right —that is His heavenly supremacy.

And now, last of all, highest of all, think of the Father and the Holy Spirit, and where is Jesus? 'In the midst!' Hence we read, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In the midst of the doctors, in the midst of the thieves, in the midst of the Churches, in the midst of the elders, in the midst of the redeemed, in the midst of the Trinity, —that is His Godhead. Only He can be

in the midst of men who is first in the midst of God.

O my Saviour, I need Thee every moment. Thy peace is an infinite deep. Remember that I am in the body, and save me in my weakness. I carry my enemy in my heart, and at my poor word he will not quit his hold: speak Thou the word, and at Thy bidding he will fly away as the shade flies before the brightness of the sun. I am waiting at Thy Cross. Thy blood can make me clean. I wait with the patient but eager expectancy of love.

VII.

POINTS OF SUPREMACY.

The tenderness of Jesus marks the whole course of His life upon earth. Sometimes I have thought of Christ's life as one great tear. He was called a man of sorrows, and He was said to be acquainted with grief. Whilst all this is quite true, it is not the whole truth, for it would give you the impression that He was always cast down in His soul and greatly disquieted with trouble. I want you to know, however, that the light of true joy often shone through the great tear of His life.

'Jesus rejoiced in spirit.' The secret of His joy He found in the faith of those who heard Him. The moment He saw faith His face seemed to broaden into a loving smile. Jesus Christ is now speaking to His praying and waiting church.

You may ask if any living man has heard the voice of Jesus Christ. Jesus does not now speak to the outward ear. There is a language of the heart which the Christian knows as a new mother-tongue. There is a spiritual whisper. This speaking keeps love alive.

I will tell you what I have heard about inferior animals in this matter of speaking. It was noticed in the Zoological Gardens of London that one of the keepers was disliked by all the animals. He was a silent, faithful, trustworthy man. No one could go about his business more carefully. Why, then, did not the animals

like him? Was it not enough for them that he cleaned their cages and brought them food?

Let me tell you, then, that this man never spoke to one of the animals that he tended and fed! This was the secret of their aversion. He had no caressing tones. He did his duty in a literal sense, but he did nothing more. How can you be friendly if you never speak to your friend? There is something in the tone of the human voice that can nowhere else be found. The tone is the soul.

You know that it is one thing to write a letter, and another thing to hold a conversation. The letter is largely mechanical and external, whereas the conversation is spontaneous and vital. It is characteristic of the dear Jesus that He established a most sacred fellowship between Himself and the souls who loved Him. He put this in a

very clear way. I think you will be impressed and fascinated by the promises which He made to His disciples. He did not stoop over them in condescending majesty, or make them afraid by causing His glory to dazzle their eyes. He actually said that if any man loved Him His Father would come unto that man, and Jesus would come and they would take up their abode with him. Is not that most wonderful? It is as if the Father and the Son made a little house of each loving heart, and dwelt in it as in a home which they loved.

To Christ His loved ones are not names on a list. They are faces, hearts, souls, living realities! The Christian family is not statistical or numerical, it is a household of loving and trusting hearts. And if one of the believers was absent, it would not be the loss of a number, it would be the loss of a soul.

I have read in a book about Tropical South Africa that certain people do not count their oxen, because they cannot count beyond, say, three or four, yet the historian says that not one of the oxen can be missing without the herdsman knowing it. How does he know it? Does he say, one, two, three, four, five, and so on? Nothing of the kind. The watchful herdsman misses a face! Is not that beautiful?

Jesus Christ does not say that He has one fewer follower to-day than He had yesterday. He says that a certain face is missing, a smile is wanting, a voice is not heard in the music of the household. This brings Jesus Christ very closely to us, and makes us feel that His tenderness may be greater than the greatest miracle which He wrought before the eyes of men.

In order to see what the religion of

Jesus Christ really is, you should compare it with other religions. Upon this matter I have read a book which brings together the religious belief and worship of many peoples and tribes. I can give you some instances which I have read in this learned and useful book. The writer says that the negro of Guinea beats his idol if the idol does not do what he likes, and if the negro is about to do anything which he does not wish his idol to see or to take notice of, he hides the idol in his waist-cloth.

How ridiculous this is when we compare it with the holy beliefs of Christians. They believe that God's eye is upon them wherever they are, and that Jesus knows every thought of their hearts.

The writer tells us that the Bechuanas are always angry with their deity for sending thunder, and he tells us also that there are certain peculiar people who shoot

poisoned arrows into storms to drive them away. The writer of this wonderful book says that in some village temples, set up for the worship of Buddha, there is a small stand of bells, which the people ring to let their deity know that they have come to worship him.

The Brahmins think that two things cannot be done without in performing religious worship, and these two things are a lighted lamp and a bell. We read that Mars, though the god of war, was wounded and fled away howling with pain. In many savage tribes the poor creatures have more respect for the chief than for their god.

The great author from whom I am quoting, says that the inhabitants of Greenland think of the sun and moon as sister and brother, and it is the sun that is the sister, and the moon is constantly pursuing her. They think that where there is an eclipse

the moon takes occasion to go among the houses to pick up whatever can be laid hands on; so when there is an eclipse the men carry chests and kettles upon the top of the house, and rattle and beat upon them to frighten away the moon and make him return to his place.

I should like to quote you more from this interesting book, but I have quoted enough to show how different other religions are from the religion of the Son of God. The writer tells us that he himself was once in Upper Egypt during the eclipse of the moon, and that the natives fired guns to frighten away the spirits that were causing the moon such trouble.

After reading this book I took up the New Testament and read the words of Jesus Christ, and they never sounded to me so musical and so rich in meaning before. If you would appreciate a garden you should live first for a few days in the

wilderness. If you would know the value of water you must spend a day or two in a country where there is none.

A wonderful teacher is Jesus! I will give you some of His words as I have passed them through my heart. In fields and flowers and flying birds, in the water-song of brooks and in the lifting up of the troubled sea, Christ found signs and hints pertaining to the kingdom of God. Hear Him:—

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a great army containing many regiments and many colours, one in leadership and one in loyalty. The kingdom of heaven is like unto the King's garden, containing all manner of fruit and flower. If the vine should say, "Because I am not the acacia I am not of the garden," is it therefore not of the garden? The kingdom of heaven is as a great household: one son is in the highest school, another is in the middle

school, and another is learning the alphabet; shall the last say that the first is wise above what is written, or the first despise the infantile study of the last? It is even so in the kingdom of God.

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a threefold process, which is not to be judged until the whole is finished. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a mother who cannot rest until the last little child has come home, or has been made safe in the arms of love. It is not the will of your Father in heaven that the least of the little ones should be lost. Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, wherefore distress not yourselves as those who are fatherless.'

And one said unto Jesus, 'Master, how is it that some who love Thee are in trouble, and some who cast out in Thy name have great abundance?'

And Jesus answered and said, 'The

end is not yet. The plough rippeth the furrow that it may be filled with seed. The fire purgeth the dross from the gold. What ye know not now ye shall know hereafter. Blessed are they who are more anxious to remove the sin than complain of the sorrow.'

And He said unto them, 'How think ye? A certain man had two sons, the one feared the Lord and the other knew not God. And it came to pass that the son who feared God with the fear of love was much afflicted, and his affliction chastened and refined his spirit, and made him pitiful and exceedingly compassionate. And the son who feared not God had no pain, and he became hard and selfish and without pity, so that no man sought him in the day of trouble. Which of them was rich with the true riches?

'Think not within yourselves that trouble is a sign of God's displeasure,

nor say bitter things about God because of your sorrow. When the end is come then may ye speak.' Then did the Christ lift up His voice in prayer, saying, ' Father in heaven, I thank Thee for Thy love to the children of men. Thou lovest the babe-heart. Thou carriest the whole earth in Thy warm bosom. Thou wilt not forsake the work of Thine own hands. Let us make man in Our image and in Our likeness.'

It came to pass that as Jesus entered a certain village, known as the daughter of the city, there came out to meet Him one whose house was made dark and sad with a great grief.

And as they talked together there drew near to Jesus a fair damsel, clad in white, who having heard of His wondrous love bade Him to her wedding-feast on the coming day save one. And there came behind Him a woman old with pain, whose

eyes were pools of tears, and whose cheeks bore the blush as of a great fire. And Jesus called her by name, and drew her hand into His own, and bade her be of good cheer, for a great light lay on the high hills like the smile of God. The expectant bride stood back a space and whispered hurried words to the man who had come from the house of mourning, though she knew Him not, nor suspected the grief that gnawed his heart.

As they communed together there drew nigh little children, without fear, bearing flowers and singing hymns of love to Jesus. The children told Jesus that they had heard of Bethlehem and the manger, and that they knew how He had taken little ones into His arms; and they laid the flowers at His feet, and when they looked at Him their faces shone as shines a dawn in spring.

Then Jesus looked round about upon them

all, and called to Him the singing children, whose sweet hymns came on the warm breath of the heart. Then were they all amazed, for all who were around Him saw themselves in His face. And Jesus said, 'There is healing in the Zaccum-tree that grows by the brook of Aaron, and balm in the branch of the Ruphim; but is not the Maker greater than the thing made? And am I not nigh at hand? Child of pain, be at ease, the tears of the upper love shall quench the fever that burns thee: let the bride-elect draw near to the altar of heaven and first wed the angel of Truth: and ye children, kiss Me and be kissed, for God's kingdom is built of such.

'How near is man to the fount of blessing if he did but know it! How many are the angels that watch him through the film of the air! Sweet ones, little ones of the Father's kingdom, go forth and

find My face, weather-writ, on every stone; find Me in every flower; hear Me in every voice; for without Me was not anything made that was made.

'Am I nameless in My own house? Have I written all the messages, the gospels, the music of the living and glorious worlds, and forgotten to sign the Author's name? Blessed are ye if ye will be blessed. Ye have the answer if ye have the prayer. In My Father's school the last and greatest attainment is simplicity. In the child-heart the Lord banks His secret.'

And the dear Christ spake much of love, giving it wider meaning than men dared to imagine, finding in it the fire of anger and the tears of pity. The silence of Christ was richer in meaning than the swollen eloquence of other men. When Christ had been long silent He lifted up His voice and said, as if speaking to

invisible listeners, and reporting to them His views of men:—

'I hear a sigh in the wind as if breathed by the heart of the whole race of man. To turn that sigh into a song, am I come into the world. So deep a sigh points to a misery that can only be removed by blood. Counsel is worthless, and example is a terror. My heart-blood can alone destroy the power of sin.

'Would that men would think on the ways of God. The slow centuries of time are but moments in the scale by which He moves. Men heed not that God works both by ice and by fire, nor do they know that ice is slumbering flame. Men have pressed fire into downward uses; yea, by it they have turned the hard root into food, and taken the poison from noxious herbs. But they have not known the meaning of the sun-seeking flame; the

sparkling and the flashing that are its song and anthem.

'I suffer from the half wisdom of men. They cannot complete their own towers. The light that is in them is darkness. They reject Faith, yet in their own world they live by it. They claim to believe in fate, yet they punish men for doing wrong. They have insured their houses, but not their souls. They have used only half their faculties; they are as eagles which have done everything but fly. Yet men are seeking Me, as blind men might grope in a thick forest. They pray downwards. They are moved by a great expectancy. They say, "To-morrow will bring deliverance."'

And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of these sayings His eyes were as though they had seen Eternity, and when they looked upon men

they were soft with pity. And His disciples marvelled and were afraid; yet no man spake a word. And there was a wafting in the still air, as if winged ones had taken flight for heaven.

Then went Jesus forth and walked up and down amongst the haunts of men. He heard the laughter of the fool, and the coo of womanhood over the cradle of the child. He saw the grisly miser clutch his bags of pelf, and the love-heart divide its loaf with hunger. He saw women whose grief was too deep for words, and He breathed on them, though they knew Him not, the warm breath of a new spring.

Jesus went alone into the graveyard, and suffered no man to be near Him. As He read the epitaphs His face became as a living tear. When over one sweet child's grave He saw the words, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven,' He remembered the

long ago, and the mothers that sought for their little ones the baptism of His smile. On the child's green grave He bent His knee, and, looking up into the white noontide, He said, 'Not here, but there, is the sleeping child: the root is here, the blossom is yonder.' And, said He, 'These graves sweeten the world: they keep the world's heart soft: they increase the area of summer, and drive off the encroaching snows of unbelief and fear.'

And when great multitudes were gathered together they began to enquire concerning Jesus.

And some said unto Him, 'Who art Thou?'

And He said, 'I am the Son of Woman, the Son of Man, the Son of God. I am the light of the world. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the Saviour of all men.' And Jesus continued and

said, 'I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. I am the Good Shepherd. I am the balm of Gilead. I give rest to weary ones.'

Then the people answered and said unto Him, 'By what authority sayest thou these things, and who gave Thee that authority?'

And Jesus answered, 'Ye know not what ye say. There is no authority but of God. Every man must prove his authority by the quality of his teaching. What God giveth him to say every man must freely speak.'

But the scribes answered, 'How shall we know that it is of God?'

And Jesus answered, 'By knowing that it is not of yourselves, neither spoken in vanity, nor spoken for gain. He that speaketh for God speaketh towards the Cross, and will be tested by pain, by forsakenness, by death.'

And whilst the people greatly wondered Jesus sat down on a hill-side and spake many things, saying, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Yea, they shall see the devil also, and know him afar off, forasmuch as truth can see through the mask of falsehood. Blessed are the unmurmuring poor, there is nothing between them and God; they are as the lowly valley, where the corn nods and sings, and not as the proud heights where the ice never melts. Blessed are they who having houses and lands and gold, have yet the lowly heart, the eye of pity and the hand of largest kindness. Verily, these are my Father's servants. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Their dead shall bring them sevenfold life, and their loss shall show them the wealth of God. Blessed is the child-heart. It is the sweetest flower in the garden of God. My Father

loveth it, and I love it, and the coming Spirit shall dwell in it, as in a home of love.'

Then answered the scribes, and said in anger, 'What is the coming Spirit?'

And Jesus answered, 'The same whom I shall send unto you. Me ye have not always. The flesh is as grass that withereth. But I will send the Holy One, invisible, tender, strengthening, and ye shall know him as the flowers know the morning sun. Blessed are they that live in prayer, for they live in faith and love, and there is no fear in their sleep.'

And His disciples say unto Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

And Jesus said unto them, 'Speak whatsoever is in your heart, and tell God your whole desire, yea, keep back nothing from the listening ear of God; and when ye have spoken all, say, "Nevertheless, not

my will but Thine be done." That is prayer, and its answer cannot fail.'

Then Jesus looked round about upon the people, and they saw as it were the Love-face of God.

VIII.

ANSWERS.

I AM deeply thankful that you are following my statements so closely as to have given rise to the desire to have special answers to special questions. When you come to know the spirit and claim of Christianity more thoroughly than I can in my poor English explain them, you will be struck, as I have said before, with the eager desire of Christianity to subject itself to the most penetrating and exacting enquiry. It submits itself to the most penetrating and exacting enquiry. It invites, I may say it challenges, every

form and degree of honest criticism. I will take your questions one by one, and give you at least some hint of what the Christian's answer would be:—

'What do the Christians really know about God?'

They know absolutely nothing but what they are told. Man does not discover God; God discovers, or reveals Himself to man. The Christians go to the Bible for their most spiritual and inspiring knowledge of God. The Bible defines revelation, so far as the Personality of God is concerned. A very wonderful revelation it is, sometimes stopping abruptly, and then giving encouragement to the highest scope for a complete and final revelation. Let me tell you one or two things that the Bible says about God: 'No man hath seen God at any time:' 'God is great, and we know Him not:' 'No man can find out God unto

perfection; there is no searching of His understanding:' 'God is a Spirit:' 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'

Some people in Christian countries have taken up a doctrine which they call Agnosticism, which teaches that not only is God not known, but that God is not knowable; they say that if there is a God He is too great to come within human consciousness or apprehension; they do not deny the existence of God, that is to say, they are not atheists, they simply say that if there is a God, it is impossible to know Him. Christians believe that there is a God, and that He has the power of making Himself known.

In this matter there is more difficulty on the side of unbelief than on the side of belief. Agnosticism not only says that God is not knowable, but it also says, though not in so many words, that the

unknowable God cannot make Himself known. On one side the doctrine is so grand that it exalts God above all possibility of knowledge; and on the other hand, it is so humiliating that it takes from God the power of coming down to the very intelligence which He has created, and of which man is so proud. What would be thought of anyone so magnifying and exalting the sun as to take away from that very sun the power of sending messages of light to the earth which admires him?

'What is the ground or authority of the partial knowledge of God claimed by Christian thinkers?'

I have partly answered this question in the reply already given. Christians go to the Scriptures, believing that they find a revelation of the Person, attributes, and laws of God. There is, however,

something more which the Christians look for in their most hopeful and elevated moods, that something more is the teaching of Jesus Christ. They believe that Jesus Christ was the Image of the Invisible God. They believe that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh.

The authority of the Christian religion is, therefore, the person of Jesus Christ, and all that is involved in His Personality. For example, His life, His teaching, His death and resurrection, and the sacrifice by which man may obtain the forgiveness of sins.

'But what proof is there of the existence of God?'

The proof of God is godliness. The proof of light is light. The proof of love is love. The proof that there is a God, living, holy, sovereign, is in the godliness which faith in such a God originates and

sustains. If the Christians found a man whom they knew to be corrupt, found base in all his motive and action, and if they induced such a man to believe in the God of the Bible—in other words, in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—they would see a change in this man's nature, and in all his habits; the man would be a new creature; he would have new motives, new desires, new habits, new hopes—in short, all things would become new.

This change of character would be described by Christians as godliness, and in such a miracle of godliness they would see a hint of the greater wonder of God. God cannot be proved intellectually. Intellect can only go to a certain limit. But up to that limit its reasoning may be sound and unanswerable. Because men cannot build a thousand miles up into the air, it does not follow that

they must not attempt to build at all.

Of course there are other proofs of God than godliness. Some men have looked at the universe, and on realising somewhat of its immensity, grandeur, order, mechanism, have not hesitated to say that the power which created such a universe is superhuman ; and that in the word superhuman they find the very secret of the Personality of God. They are quite sure that man never made the universe. They will not admit that any evil power built creation. They cannot tolerate the idea that the universe was made by weakness. They are thus driven to believe that the least difficult of all creeds is to accept the faith that 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'

Other Christians have not hesitated to say that they have discovered in human history a shape of things, a continuity, an interaction, suggestive of a gracious power,

which they describe as Providence. Many Christians do not scruple to say that there are more difficulties connected with the rejection of God than with his reverential and trustful acceptance by mind and heart.

'How do Christians make themselves out to be better than other people?'

They do not make it out at all. By the Christian religion self-conceit is characterised as wickedness. You do not put the question in the right way. Your inquiry should be, 'How do Christians make out their Master to be more trustworthy than any of the other religious teachers within the four corners of history?'

I beseech you again, as I have done repeatedly, not to fix your mind upon Christians, but upon Christ. If you ask me why Jesus Christ should be believed I give you His own answer, 'Believe Me

for the works' sake.' Here we come back to ground we have already occupied. If there is any teaching superior to Christ's, produce it. If you can amend any of the sayings of Christ, let us see your emendations. If you know of any teacher whose doctrine comes out into practical life with more unselfish service, and with larger charity, by all means let us know what it is, that we may search it, as the doctrine of Jesus has been searched.

Jesus died that He might prove the divinity and the beneficence of His mission. Jesus anticipated the wondrous sovereignty of Spirit—He called it the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost. He got beyond the physical and the measurable, into the region of the spiritual and the ineffable. The beautiful conception of the Christians is, that Jesus is alive to-day, that indeed He is from everlasting to everlasting, and that over Him death has

no more dominion. Do not compare Christians with pagans, compare Christ with other teachers.

Let me give you what I conceive to be the answer of Jesus Christ to many such questions as yours :—

'I have not come to reconcile God to man, but to reconcile man to God. In Me man is not seeking God, but God is seeking man. Herein do I separate Myself from all that ever came before Me. They were seekers and suppliants crying mightily and faithfully for God. I am a revealer. I have come to declare the Father. God is love. God is ready to forgive. I lay down My life for the salvation of man. No man taketh it from Me.

'In the day of man's awakened conscience, when he shall see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and feel the utterness of his own feebleness, he will cry for a

Deliverer; and in that hour he will know the exceeding depth of My love. When men are afraid to look upon God because they have sinned they shall see My cross and their hearts shall be filled with hope. When ye seek Me ye shall surely find Me. Rend your hearts and not your garments, come before God in penitence, cry unto Him in My saving Name and He will abundantly pardon. I am able to save unto the uttermost.

'Let not your heart be troubled, for I shall have the heathen for Mine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for My possession. Let the nations rejoice, and let the isles sing aloud for joy, for the world is being saved: the ages hasten to their harvest day.

'Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Let the vilest come. Now is the day of salvation. Let the backslider return, and

let him that is afraid flee to My cross. Ho, everyone that thirsteth let him come unto the waters; yea, if any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. Let the tired man and the weary mother come unto Me; and the pilgrim bearing the load of many days, let him come.

'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Whithersoever the Gospel-river cometh there is life. My heart yearns over the nations. Tell China to come, and bid Japan make haste. Say to India, "Thy Saviour is at the door." Carry My love to Madagascar, to the New Hebrides, to Korea, and all the islands of the sea, and bid the kings of the earth hasten to their Lord. Africa shall stretch out her hands to the cross, her mountains shall be crowned with light, and her valleys shall be filled with peace.

'God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the whole

earth. God is no respecter of persons. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Behold I stand at the door and knock, blessed is he who openeth the door.

'Think not,' said Christ, 'that I am come to destroy benighted men; I am come not to destroy but to fulfil. They rejoiced to see My day, and they saw it and were glad. When Buddha mounted White Kantaka and rode forth by night to find the truth, he went in quest of Me, though he wist not that he sought the Son of Man. When the Suddha Devas strewed the red Mohra-flowers and the Yakshas of the air laid carpets for the stallion's feet, they knew not that they forecast the day when the Son of Man would ride upon a lowlier beast into the Jerusalem He loved. When the Indian sang to Vishnu and

called him, " Mystery, Light of Life, Dawn beyond the Dream," He saw My day, but wist not how to name the Son of Man. When the Hindoo people read the Mahâbhârata and the Râmâyana, they read with rapture a Bible which no disciple of the Son of Man should despise. The Hindoo prizeth the reading of them as a merit honoured on earth and lauded in heaven.'

And Jesus spake of all His forerunners lovingly and said, ' When men go forth to publish My Name let them not mock any word of sincerity or any stumbling in prayer. I am the light of the world. All good men saw My day. My word is not the contradiction but the fulfilment of theirs. Respect the temples of the idols by recognising their larger meaning. Each is to the idolater a house of God. In the beauty of Ikegami, and the glories of Nikko, see more than the skill of man,

and even in the hideous images of Korea see some proof that God is still creating man and preparing him to see that God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.'

And Jesus said, 'Hate nothing but hypocrisy, and lies, and selfishness. Mock nothing but ambition, and vanity, and conceit. Find the divine note in every man, and call to him in the spirit of hope. Beware of self-righteousness. Beware of all professional righteousness. Beware of all righteousness that is clothed in purple and fine linen, and that fares sumptuously every day. Beware of all self-consciousness, self-idolatry, self-esteem. Let others esteem thee, O man. He that seeketh his life shall lose it.'

And one said unto Him, 'Master, wherein art Thou greater than all who went before Thee?'

And Jesus answered, 'In grace and truth; in universality and sympathy. I give My life for the world. I am not come to one nation, but to all. In Me there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, neither bond nor free, but in Me all are one. Other men have taught in fractions. I am the whole number.'

In giving you this answer I wish you to understand that although I have not given the exact words of Christ, I have expressed myself in the very spirit of Christ. It is in that spirit we must do all our work of inquiry respecting the true nature of the Christian religion. If we approach our inquiry in a spirit of unbelief or hostility it will necessarily end in bitter disappointment, or it will so end as to gratify our own intellectual conceit and vanity. If we would read the Bible itself

so as to get at the right meaning we must read it in the spirit of Christ.

Undoubtedly there are many things in the holy books of the Christians which appear to be most extraordinary, and indeed some people find them to be incredible. From my point of view those people have gone to work in the wrong spirit, and so have set all Biblical things in a wrong relation. I advise you to begin with the birth, life, teaching and works of Jesus Christ. Make yourself thoroughly acquainted with these, and read the Bible in the light of their revelation.

As to there being extraordinary or even incredible things in the Bible, you must remember that there are extraordinary and incredible things in yourself. Man is a great self-contradiction. He can both blaspheme and pray; he is both body and soul; the tongue that can tell a lie can

also speak the truth; even wise men sometimes act foolishly; the little self sometimes masters the great philanthropy; it does not follow from these facts that we are to deny, either the existence or the importance of human nature. Some aspects of life we are obliged to set forth in parable, or poetry, or veiled analogy; it does not, therefore, follow that there is no basis of fact in the life of man.

I believe all your questions were asked in sincerity, and I have accordingly endeavoured to answer them. Let nothing be done out of vain-glory, or pride, of intellect, or selfish calculation. Do not fix the mind upon solitary and detached portions of truth, but look upon revelation in its entirety, and never move until you are sure of the presence and the spirit of Christ; then all will be well.

IX.

POINTS OF ILLUSTRATION.

I WAS talking to an English friend some days ago about the death of children, and I told him of the sorrow which you are now bearing in the loss of Musha. He said he could feel for you, for he himself had lost two children in infancy, and that somehow he could only think of them as two large bright stars shining in the sky.

He asked me to send the little box of flowers which you would receive by the

last mail. He said they were flowers that had talked to him a good deal, bringing him consolation from the very heart of heaven. You would see that I have written on a piece of paper the name of each flower. I am told that the Red Poppy means to English Christians the sweet word Consolation; the Amaranth means Immortality; and the little Snowdrop stands for Hope.

In placing Rosemary in the box I ventured to kiss it and to say, 'In remembrance of darling Musha,' for Rosemary means Affectionate Remembrance. The White Violet you must think of as meaning Innocence, and the Celandine means Joys to Come.

My friend told me that he had no doubt he should meet his two boys in heaven. He says that he talks to them every day, and he believes he receives messages from their warm lips. All this may be but poe-

try, but it is tender poetry, and the kind of poetry which the heart makes for itself in the night of sorrow and desolation.

As we must have some thoughts about these great subjects, why not rather have thoughts of tenderness and love and hope, than thoughts of despair and misery and horrible lonesomeness? It seems to me that the human heart is never less true to its best self than when it takes refuge in darkness and hostile silence. That cannot be the heart as God made it, and as God intended it to be.

In accepting their great sorrows, such as the loss of their children, the Christians are not crushed by an iron fate, they believe they are devoutly submitting and consenting to a holy will,—the very will of the wise and compassionate God.

I want you to see the difference between two states of mind. The man who is not a Christian looks upon his loss, and pain,

and sorrow, and gloomily says: 'This is fate; this could not be helped; this is pitiless destiny. I bow to my fate, only because I am crushed by its cruel power.' That is a poor speech for the heart to make to itself.

The man who is a Christian says: 'I live under the guidance of a pitiful and most loving Father; He knows what is best for me; He chastens me that I may become a better man; He does not willingly inflict pain. The child whom He has taken away was His before it was mine. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

If you bind me down to produce specific authority for these great sentiments, it is only fair that I should bind you down to produce specific authority for your belief in destruction, and your recourse to despair. Remember that the call for authority

may be as certainly made from the one side as from the other.

I believe in the God of the spring and the summer, the God of the birds and of the flowers, the God of the blue skies and the waving corn. Having this strong confidence, I am able to bear the shortenings of the day and the cold of the winter.

The Christians always conclude their prayers, if not in words yet in spirit, with two statements: (1) 'Not my will but Thine be done,' and (2) 'For Jesu's sake.' They believe that the will of God is always right, and therefore always best; and they pray that their will may be obedient to the will divine. In prayer they state all their wants, and God graciously permits them to do so; and they conclude their prayer by saying in effect: 'These are the things we earnestly desire to have, but if it would be better for us not to have them, then the

will of God and not the will of man be done.'

Prayer is never offered but in the name of Jesus, and it is made possible and acceptable by the sweet words, 'For Jesu's sake.' Christians believe that God works all things through Jesus, and they are sure that Jesus, having died for the world, will do all in His power to save the world from error, and darkness, and needless suffering. They rest in the arms of Jesus. Whatever happens, I repeat, does not happen as a matter of unintelligent and unsympathising fate, but as an occurrence in the all-wise and all-compassionate providence of God.

When this sacred relation to Jesus Christ is thoroughly established Christians are able to work many wonders, or miracles, in their daily life and intercourse. The prevailing tone of their minds is thankfulness. The strongest feeling of

their hearts is to do, under all circumstances, exactly what Jesus Christ would Himself have done. This is made most clear in the greatest of all their actions, which is the action of Forgiveness.

I wish you could see how the spirit of forgiveness works in the life of Christians. Jesus was always particular about this action of forgiveness. He said that if men did not forgive one another neither would God forgive them. In the beautiful prayer which he taught his scholars he put these words into their mouths: 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.'

In this way, as in all other ways, Jesus Christ calls upon men to prove their discipleship. It is hard work to forgive. 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.' Is it not

hard to treat an enemy as if he were a friend? Is it not most difficult to forget the injury which any man has done? Yet this is possible in Christ Jesus. For Christ's sake, and in the strength of Christ's grace, we can forgive the enemy who, through a life time, has done us nothing but injury. This is a spiritual miracle! That shows the gracious and mighty power of the grace of Christ!

If you meet a Christian who hates his brother you may regard him as a liar. If you ever hear of a Christian who would return evil for evil, you may be sure he has not entered into the spirit of his Lord. The spirit of Christ is a spirit of pardon. When God pardons he does not do it reluctantly or sparingly, but with great abundance of love: 'Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return

unto the Lord, and He will abundantly pardon.'

So I come back to the chord I have so often struck, and repeat the heavenly music, that Christianity is not a sentiment only, or a mere emotion, it is a great discipline, a severe chastening, and an ultimate sanctification.

Of course all Christians are not equally advanced. Some Christians cannot pray aloud. Other Christians are very timid. Some Christians converse with Jesus only by night. We must not apply the ideal rule to young and struggling minds. You do not expect a child to go to war, you do not expect a child who is learning words of one syllable to write books like a venerable author. So some Christians are mere infants; others are a little more advanced, others are struggling with manifold infirmity, others are under stress of persistent temptation. Judge

them according to their several conditions, and remember that he who would follow Jesus, however weak he may be in his endeavours, is to be judged by his motive rather than by his action.

X.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE.

I FIND that the Christians rely very much upon what their doctrines have done for them in private or personal experience, as the best proof that their doctrines are true. They tell me that their doctrines are often very perplexing and very difficult, and that it is almost impossible to explain some of them in words; but they never know how precious their doctrines are until trouble comes upon their lives, like a great flood. As I understand the case,

they take the doctrines out of the intellect and set them in action amongst the daily experiences of life. Instead of being intellectual puzzles they become practical helpers.

Is not this wise, and is it not strong in reason? This is exactly what the Christians do. And is it not exactly what is done in practical life? We do not know how strong or how weak the roof is until it has been tried by great storms of rain. If the roof withstands the flood we say it is a good roof. It is the same with a bridge; if carts, and wagons, and horses, and armies, and all kinds of travellers can pass safely over the bridge, we do not hesitate to say that the bridge is good.

The same reasoning applies to a friend; if he is staunch, faithful, helpful in the time of darkness, and fear, and trouble, we say he is a good friend, though there may be much about him which we neither

know nor fully understand. We are not ashamed to say that when other men forsook us he was always at hand to render the help that we needed. It would be unjust to deny this. It would be high treason against our own best life.

It is precisely the same with regard to Christians and their doctrines. They do not keep their doctrines as merely intellectual treasures, but they put them to daily test in all the need and pain of life. They go to their churches that their lives may be strengthened. They do not go because they owe certain debts to mere superstition, they go that their strength may be renewed for the work which lies nearest to their hand.

When our people go to the Temple of Hanuma, Son of the Wind, Rescuer of the Bride of Rama, it is mainly to gratify a certain desire of mere imagination. When

the Christians go to their churches they hope to bring back with them courage and inspiration, which will serve them in daily struggle. When the Hindoos fill their mouths with the water of the Ganges, and even wash themselves and their clothes in that river, they have really no idea of cleanliness. When the Christian goes to the Cross of Christ his one idea is that his soul may be cleansed and made as fine linen. Into our Cow Temple strangers are only allowed to enter one step. It is so different with the Christians and their holy places; they enter with holy boldness into the most sacred places, and they go to such places that they may pray to God for pardon through His son Jesus Christ, and they believe that they come away in the enjoyment of Divine forgiveness.

Let me tell you what I know to be true in a case that came under my personal

notice. A poor widow told me her own story. I wish to tell it to you as nearly as possible in the very words which she herself used:—

'It was in this lonely farm-house that my poor husband sickened and died many years ago. We brought up eight children under this thatched roof, and did all we could for them out of seventeen shillings a week; more than seventeen shillings a week we never had, indeed for many years we had not more than fourteen. My poor husband never complained. He never even asked his employer for more wages. He was a very silent and patient man, always telling me and telling himself that a contented mind is a continual feast. My husband used to tell me that when he died I should find a Will under his pillow; and of course I smiled, because I knew he had no property to leave. I

knew that he had a good character to leave to his children, but beyond that they would inherit nothing from their most loving father. When he used to tell the boys that there would be a Will under his pillow when he died they also would smile, and the youngest of them would leap on his knee and kiss him; and I sometimes thought that to get those sweet kisses from his darling children was his reason for talking about the impossible Will.

'And yet it all turned out to be true! When his last sweet breath escaped his lips and he was at rest with God, we did discover a small piece of paper under his pillow,—the only feather pillow we had in all the house. Our poor beds have always been filled with chaff, but I did manage, I hardly know how, to get a feather pillow for my dying loved one. I have that pillow to-day. No other head has

lain upon it. If you would like to see the Will I shall show it to you, because I think the reading of it will do you good.'

I said it would give me great pleasure to see the Will, if she cared to put it into the hands of a friendly stranger. As she turned to go to the little chest of drawers, where the precious document was kept, I saw that she drew her poor old hand—twisted with life-long rheumatism—across her eyes, as if to remove a tear; and then she said, in a really cheerful voice, the vivacity of which surprised me, as she handed me the paper—

'Here it is, just as I found it;' and then she drew her hand over it, as if to remove invisible dust.

It was poor paper. I took it tremulously, having a fear upon me that by some un-

imaginable means it might take to itself wings and fly away. I could have asked her to join me in holding the Will, so superstitious was I as to its reality and value. This was the Will:—

> 'When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.'

As I read these words a light from heaven seemed to rest on the sheet of paper. Do you know my very heart believed the words as I read them! The paper seemed to contain a revelation. Looking at all the circumstances of the case, I felt that no human brain could of itself have conceived a sentiment so

sublime. But that is always the way with the Christians. They look to God for bread, and water, and guidance, and strength, and everything they need for their whole life.

When I placed the precious paper in the hands of my poor friend she smilingly said—

'That is all I have had to live on these seventeen years, but I tell you with my very heart that it has been good living. Not one word has failed. Sometimes my heart has been very heavy, especially when at midnight I have had one or two of the children down with the fever, and the winter wind has howled round the thatched cottage, and not a soul to speak to, as if it would carry the whole away bodily. It can be very ghostly up here on windy nights. Everything seems to be talking then, and the voices are very thrilling. In my dreariest hours I have taken out

that piece of paper and read again the holy words :—

> " When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them." '

After a moment or two of sweet bitterness, joy deeply braided with mourning, I ventured to say, merely for the sake of conversation, as I glanced at the neatly-arranged room, a woman's hand being visible in all the delicate poverty—

' You seem to have a nice little home.'

' Yes,' said she, ' and it is all through the Will. God furnished this little room.

They tell me that God made the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and all the beautiful things we see, and I am quite sure that He furnished this little place with His own hands, and that He did it when I was asleep. You might think I would know the Will by heart; and so I do, every word of it, but that is not the same as holding it in my hand and reading it. You see, my John wrote it himself. It is his own very writing, not very good, perhaps, but good enough for me; so when I see it he seems to be quite near, and when I read it I think I hear his voice rather than my own.'

'Then you would not like to part with it?'

'Part with it?' she inquired, as if a new idea had been suddenly presented.

'Part with it?' she continued, 'No. That piece of paper is to be laid on my heart when I am laid in my coffin. It has

been meat and drink to me. It has been music to me. Other people have pianos and fiddles and flutes, and the head man on the estate has a musical box; I have none of these, but I have the Will, and that beats all.'

'And what has it done for you?'

'Done? everything, child. It has put heart into me, it has cheered me, it has sat up at nights with me, it has made my old gowns so warm that the cold of winter could not get at me, it has put coals into the yard when I was quite sure I had only enough for one day more. Done for me?' and she kissed the Will and put it lovingly into the drawer which still stood open.

Rich men have their bullion in fire-proof safes; jewellers lock up their diamonds in strong rooms; but this poor soul—yet not poor, but rich—had the Will

which was ever in her little thatched cottage as a Light and Song.

That dear woman's little thatched cottage has become quite a church to me. I go back to it mentally whenever I feel inclined to doubt and fear. There is that sweet old mother, there stood a living gospel, a tender and indisputable witness of the power of truths that are not to be found out of the Bible.

It seems to me that the inspiration of the Bible is best proved by such delightful instances of its quickening and sustaining power. You will observe that in this case we have a two-fold witness; not only the surviving woman, but her suffering and triumphant husband. My submission to you is, that if the Bible can work such miracles we need not go further in proof of its divine inspiration.

This dear woman did not complain of her hard life, or murmur because the words of the Will, though beautiful, had not come to anything outwardly useful. To hearts that do not need them, such words are simply beautiful, but to hearts that are broken, and that stand in need of encouragement, the words themselves are a stimulus and a benediction.

My poor friend had one grand text and she seemed to say: 'This, at all events, has been proved. At this particular point my faith cannot be shaken, whatever mysteries or difficulties may be in the Bible this is absolutely true in my own case. I do not ask anyone to argue about it, because I myself have proved it to be true.'

I think this is the right way to read the Bible. Get hold of one grand truth, a truth you have proved yourself, and hold

on to that until you are ready to go further. Do not venture into what is unknown, but quietly stand upon the ground which you have proved to be solid.

XI.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE CONTINUED.

I FIND more and more that this way of judging their religion is very common amongst Christians, and, as I have just said, I think it is most sensible. Their faith does something for them. They turn it into a kind of daily bread for the soul, and gratefully live upon it. When I ask one and another how they prove their religion to be true, they always point me to what it has done for those who believe in it. What better proof can be desired?

Suppose you had a pain in your head, and some one gave you medicine to relieve it; and suppose that after taking the medicine there was no more pain in your head, would not that be the very best proof that the medicine was good for its purpose? Suppose you were very hungry, and someone gave you a food you had never heard of before, and something that did not look like the food you had been used to; and suppose you were refreshed and strengthened by it, would not that be proof enough of the goodness of the food?

Please think very carefully before you give your answer, because if you admit that I am right, you admit, perhaps without knowing it, the very argument upon which Christians rest their case. They say—'Try the medicine, Try the food, Try the doctrine, and judge by what they do for you, if you are in pain, or distress, or need of any kind.'

I went a few days ago to a little meeting of Christian women who were engaged in making garments for the very poor of the town in which they live. This very subject of proving Christianity came up rather unexpectedly, but I was glad that it did come up, because I am still in quest of information respecting the nature and work of the Christian religion. One intelligent and sweet-looking woman said, in the course of the conversation :—

'I cannot but believe the Christian religion to be true when I remember what it has done for my own husband. My life was once a constant misery. I dreaded the very sound of the man's foot upon the road as he was coming home, and his own children fled from him as they would have fled from a mad dog. Now he is gentle, loving, and as kind as the day is long. What did it? Who did it? It was all

Jesus. My husband gave his heart to Jesus, and now our home is full of peace and joy. Do you think I could turn my back on Jesus? Can a woman turn her back upon the best friend she ever knew?'

I said, 'Certainly not. Whoever Jesus may be, and whatever men may say about Him, His very Name has turned the lion to a lamb, and you must love that name and never be ashamed of it.'

Then another woman told me her little private story:—

'I never had a bad husband, but I had a prodigal son, and Jesus brought him home and gave him back to me; so in a certain kind of way I am twice his mother and he is twice my son. A man often comes to our street (at least he used to come very often) to lecture against Jesus Christ, but he is always frightened when

he sees my Tom in front of him, because he knows that Tom will get up the moment the lecturer is done, and will tell the people what Jesus has done for him; and they all know Tom, so they can judge for themselves. I heard Tom speak one Sunday afternoon, and it did my heart good. He spoke like a preacher, although he is only a working man, working at the foundry for eighteen shillings a week, and every week giving three shillings of it away to the poor, and he has had no schooling to speak of. He said:—

"'You all know Tom Jackson, and what I used to be. You know I could swear like the worst of you, and you know that I could drink like a fish, and you further know that there never was a bit of mischief in the town that I was not mixed up with. Very well; that's one side of the case. You know what I

am now. I live amongst you, and you can see me every day in the week. Do I swear now? Do I drink now? Am I not just the opposite of all you have ever known me to be? Then I ask you, "What did it?" There never was an effect without a cause. In me you see a very striking effect, and I want you to know what cause has brought it about. I am not ashamed of the answer I am about to give you. I am a miracle of Jesus Christ. I read His life, I thought much about His wonderful words, I studied all His course as He lived and talked amongst men; He made me ashamed of my sin, He led me away to His cross, and at the foot of the cross He offered me pardon if I would confess my sins. I said, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and I seemed to get the answer on the very spot; and from that day I have been what is called a converted man. I am not speaking words only, I

am living a life amongst you, and I ask you to judge the words by the life."

'How proud I was of Tom that day! And what did the lecturer do? He had been making a long, and, as he thought, a clever speech, and he thought he had broken down the whole Christian argument; but when he heard Tom going on from sentence to sentence, and when he saw how attentive all the people were, he sneaked away; and as he was leaving the platform the people laughed at him, and he made no reply. Tom's little bed-room is full of beautiful mottoes, in rich gilt letters, and all the mottoes are about Jesus:—

"I will give you rest."
"What would Jesus do?"
"For His sake."
"Let not your heart be troubled."

'Tom seems to feed upon these beautiful words. They give him strength, and hope, and joy. There is never a dull moment in the house when Tom is in it, and Jesus is the explanation of it all.'

I then told the woman about the Will which the other poor woman found under her husband's pillow, and when I ended the story one of the company said:—

'That is God's truth, though I do not know the poor creature. I myself have proved the promises of God. They are no idle words. The Bible is not waste paper. I know nothing about learning, and arguing, and fine long words, but I do know that when you really and truly want God He is never far off. Do not ask me to explain it, for I cannot. There is far too much explanation going about. I cannot ex-

plain the sun, but I do love the sunlight, and I cannot do without it.'

Then another woman spoke about her son Harry, and said:—

'I know that lecturer you have just spoken about, and a bad mean thing he is. That man would not open a door without being paid for it, and he would not part with a penny to save the body or soul of any other man. I did, for sure, let loose my tongue on that wretch. He is a doer of mischief. If our young people followed him we should soon be as bad as we have ever been.

'My Harry has a little wooden place in a field just outside the town. The field belongs to a gentleman who lets Harry have it without paying any rent. All over the field are nice little wooden huts, they are not big enough to be called houses. And

who do you think Harry gets to this little place, which he calls his "settlement"? I never saw such a sight in my life. He says he likes his mother to go up now and then and see his people. He is amongst them as a kind of father, for they look to him for everything, and I believe they adore the ground he walks on. They are all poor people, cripples, blind, or half blind; several of them are little outcast children, and Harry makes it the chief joy of his life to wait upon them all, and to give them whatever his means will permit. My heart was quite overcome.

'Jesus did it all. But for Jesus, Harry would not have been engaged in that blessed work. I told the lecturer all about Harry's doings, and I said to him, "Now, Mr. Lecturer, what does your religion do for people? Have you any kind of benevolent 'settlement' anywhere? What does

your religion compel you to do for other people? It compels you to do nothing, but beg for yourself. You go up and down amongst the working folks talking about Moses, and the Hittites, and the Flood, and the sun and moon standing still; and you try to make your hearers laugh at the Bible, but what does it all come to? Do the poor look to you for help? Are the hungry sure that you will give them bread? Do you ever go out after that which is lost until you find it? Your mouth pours out long words which you do not understand yourself, and you try to take away the Bible from people who love it; and the whole thing ends in doing good to no one. My Harry is the best answer to all your pompous arguments. The Jesus who made my Harry what he is shall be my Saviour, and I will go into eternity with His sweet name upon my lips."

'And the miserable lecturer sneaked away from me too. If I had argued with him he might have beaten me, because he knows more words than I know. But I had one fact to keep to, and that fact no man can take away from me. So long as Harry lives he will be an unanswerable proof that Jesus Christ is the Friend and the Saviour of sinners.'

I have been enquiring into the work of some of the great Christian Societies, and I am astounded at the amount of good of all kinds which they have been enabled to do.

Jesus Christ laid down a rule about which I should like to have your opinion. He said, 'A tree is known by its fruit.' Do you believe this? Would you apply it to the affairs of common daily life? I think the rule is most reasonable and just. I mean to apply it to the work which has

been done by societies of Christians, and by individual Christians. If the fruit is bad, I will declare that the tree which bore it was bad. If the fruit is good, I am bound to conclude that the tree on which it grew was a good tree. I have told you again and again that Christianity desires to be judged by this simple rule.

I saw an account in one report of Christian work on which I am prepared to risk the whole plea for the excellency of Christianity. One night a policeman was walking upon his beat in an English city. Suddenly his foot struck something that was lying on the road. Stooping to ascertain what he had struck, he took up a parcel, and on opening it discovered a living child. Some one had thrown the child away, and thus it came into the hands of the policeman, who took it to the workhouse for protection. When the case came before the

authorities they had to agree upon a name by which the child was to be known. The child was found on St. Thomas' day, so they called it Thomas. It was found between two bridges which span the river flowing through the city, so they called it Bridges. Thomas Bridges was the new little pauper in the city workhouse.

Years went by, during which the boy was brought up according to the rules of the parish poor-house. In course of time the boy's mind was awakened to take an interest in the life and work of Jesus Christ; the upshot of which was, that he expressed a desire to become a Christian missionary. He made his application to a Missionary Society, expressing only the wish that he might be sent to the very worst field of labour within the knowledge of the society. He would not go to a civilised country, with his whole soul he desired to be sent to the most ferocious

and abandoned tribes that could be reached. I wish you to fix your mind intently upon that point.

A great man of science, Darwin, had written an account of a country, the inhabitants of which he described as hardly human. He did not speak of them as partly good; he described them as absolutely and hopelessly bad. He advised that British ships should not come near the country. In his own mind, one of the most enlightened in the whole civilised world, he gave up the inhabitants as utterly hopeless.

To that country Thomas Bridges desired to be sent as a Christian missionary. To that country he went, and it was considered by his best friends that he had gone to his destruction. Little by little he made his way. Little by little he got the attention of one and another of the abandoned savages. His soul was ruled by the very patience of

Christ. Disappointment after disappointment he accepted as additional reasons for prayerful perseverance. One short step at a time he went forward. He endeavoured to make it known to one or two of the people that he wished to do them good. In course of time he made real progress, and at the end of a few years the country was civilised, christianised, and well furnished with homes, and schools, and churches.

Now I appeal to you as a just man, and I ask you, 'What did it?' You are bound to give an answer. You will find an account of the condition of the country given by the learned and unprejudiced pen of the great scientist, Charles Darwin; afterwards you will find a report of the missionary's work in the publications of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Darwin gave up Terra del Fuego as hopeless, describing it in language full of

horror and disgust. The Christian apostle would not give up Terra del Fuego. He took the Gospel of Christ into it; he lived the Gospel which he preached. He gradually and securely gained the confidence of the people, and the result was that Terra del Fuego became beautiful as the garden of the Lord.

Now, my dear friend, we must be just. We know of only one cause for this wondrous transformation, and that one cause was the Cross of Christ. If the Cross of Christ could do this for one country it could do it for the whole world. When the missionaries of the Cross see such results of their holy labour, is it wonderful that they should be full of joy, and that they should ardently desire to subdue India and China and Polynesia to the sovereignty of the Cross?

If you can match such an instance out

of the records of paganism, I beseech you to do so, because I do not wish to claim for Christianity more than is really due to it. Do not shrink from this task. I would graciously challenge you to undertake it and to prosecute it with all possible zeal. I shall not forget the rule, but shall abide by it, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'

I read something of the same kind in a great book concerning the early days of Christianity. According to that book the life of a slave was of no account in old Rome. The slaves waited upon the great lords and ladies at the Roman banquets, and the historian says that if any one of the slaves dropped so much as a crystal vase, or did anything to irritate his lord, that slave could be thrown into a fishpond, and no tribunal would inquire into the shocking disregard of human life. The same historian says that if a waiting

maid had given her lady any cause of offence the lady could cause the poor offender to be branded with hot irons.

That was the case before Christ was preached in Rome. After the Gospel became known, wherever it was received, it worked vital and most wonderful charms. When the Roman lord was converted the slave instantly became a man in his estimation, and he assumed responsibility towards the slave; and when the slave became a Christian, he would sit down next to his lord when the little Christian band gathered together at the Christian ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Whatever worked this wonderful change was certainly a peculiar power. It did not degrade the lord, it elevated the slave.

The great doctrine of Manhood became part of the world's best culture. To be a man was to have a title to respect.

Poverty itself was dignified. The most powerful men, when under the influence of the spirit of Christ, became deeply interested in the welfare of the outcast, the degraded, and the hopeless members of society.

Here again I must ask you to apply the simple rule, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' Tried by this just test and standard, what other religion can compare with the religion of Jesus Christ?—tender in compassion, inflexible in law, hopeful under all circumstances of a discouraging nature.

My submission is, that only they who have really tried Christianity can tell what Christianity is. You do not ask a blind man to give you an opinion of colour; you do not ask an ox to calculate the return of an eclipse; you do not ask the Icelander to give you his opinion of the Tropics he has

never seen and never heard of: why then should you go to irreligious men to give you an opinion of religion; why go to men who never pray to give you their opinion on the utility of prayer? Look to the Christians, where enlightened and honest, for illustrations of the true nature and real power of the Christian Faith.

This is the course which I have taken, with the result that I am daily more convinced that only the Cross of Christ can save the world.

XII.

DICTIONARY FOR BEGINNERS.

In your Christian studies you will come upon words which will be strange to you. I will give you a few hints as to what I think they may mean:—

Atonement.—The work which Jesus Christ did when He died for the sins of the world. His death was not a murder, but a sacrifice on the divine side. From the human side Jesus Christ was killed as any

evil doer would have been; but there is a divine side, and on that side the death of Jesus Christ was an offering to God on behalf of sin. By the death of Christ God and man are made One.

AGNOSTIC.—One who says that if there is a God it is impossible for the mind of man to know Him. The agnostic does not deny the existence of God, he simply says that if there is a God it is impossible for the mind of man to comprehend the idea. The agnostic forgets that God may have the power to reveal Himself. He who made the human mind knows exactly how much of the Divine Personality it can receive. Man must not measure the rain by the dimensions of his own cistern. There are rivers as well as cisterns,

and there are seas as well as rivers.

ATHEIST.—One who denies the existence of God. One who says in plain terms: There is no God. He must be a very wise man who is able to deny the Divine existence,—if not a very wise man, a man of incredible folly.

BACKSLIDER.—One who instead of keeping his ground or going forward has slipped backwards and come to the point he started from. Backsliding is possible in knowledge as well as in morals.

BAPTISM.—The religious application of water to a human being. Some Christians believe in Infant Baptism, and others believe in Adult

Baptism. In both cases there is Baptism, and that is the vital point. Some questions are open to two views, and either view may be held sincerely.

Bible.—A book. Any book. Now specially used as the name of the Holy Book of the Christians.

Catholic.—Universal,—including all who have a common faith, however much they may be divided in intellectual opinion. If you take all the Christian communions or churches together, you may speak of the whole number as the Catholic Church.

Church.—The body of Christ. A communion of Christians bound together in the name of Christ.

Where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, obeying His doctrine and breathing His Spirit, Jesus Christ is in their midst, and men who are united in Christ are united to one another in the sense of constituting a church.

CONSECRATION.—The act of giving one's self wholly to the love and service of Christ.

CONSCIENCE.—The inward authority that tells you what is right and what is wrong, what to do and what to leave undone. Every intelligent man knows that in his soul there is such an authority. Conscience can be enlightened, or darkened, or perverted. The great object of the Christian when he is right-

minded, is to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.

DEVELOPMENT. — Unfolding, advancing, growing. When the acorn is developed it is an oak. When the child is developed he is a man. Development is not necessarily a change of quality, —the infant and the patriarch are alike human.

DEVIL.—The evil power that rules evil men. He is often thought of as the spiritual father of such men. He is the enemy of mankind. He is the power that would turn men away from God.

DOCTRINE.—The doctrine may be single or may be manifold. There is a body of doctrine, there is a

common doctrine, that which you believe may be described as your doctrine.

DEATH.—The final decay of the body. There is also moral death. Men may be dead in trespasses and sins. Hearts may be dead to one another.

DEIST.—One who believes in the existence of God, but not in His personal and special providence. The deist believes that God created the universe, and left it to take care of itself or to grow according to His original design.

EVANGELICAL.—The evangelical doctrine is that the Son of God entered into flesh, revealed the Divine Father-

hood, the divine love, and the divine justice, and delivered Himself up as a sacrifice for sin. The evangelical believer believes that there is no salvation but in Jesus Christ, and not in Jesus Christ as a mere example, but in Jesus Christ as the great High Priest of the world. The evangelical faith exceeds all others in depth of feeling and in range of emotion.

Evolution.—The doctrine that all things animate and inanimate came out of one germ, or one plasm, or one microscopical atom. The evolutionist believes that out of one spark or pulse or mist all things came. This doctrine is held by many who are wise, reverent, and well instructed. It is believed that the time

may come when both classes of thought regarding the method of creation may be reconciled.

HEAVEN.—The place of rest, and yet the place of further service beyond the grave. Christians believe that all who die in Christ live in a state of perfect purity and in perfect joy.

HELL.—The place to which the finally impenitent are sent. Evil is its own hell. No bad man can be really and lastingly happy.

INSPIRATION.—The inbreathing into the soul of spiritual influence. A man is inspired when he inhales the air. Christians believe that God breathed Himself into the prophets and

teachers whose words are given in the Bible. They do not believe that such prophets and teachers invented the things which they uttered; the Christian belief is that holy men of old wrote and spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

INVISIBLE.—More than unseen. Realities that cannot be made visible. The unseen and the invisible are two different things. That which is unseen to-day may be seen to-morrow, but the invisible can never be seen.

ORTHODOXY.—The commonly accepted belief. The opposite word is heterodoxy, which means departure from that which is generally accepted as

true. If the common belief is that two and two are four, he would be heterodox who denied the statement, or put some other statement in its place. The orthodox doctrine is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was bodily and personally; the heterodox view is that the resurrection was ideal, spiritual, influential. It should be noticed that heterodoxy often displaces orthodoxy. What is heterodox to-day may be orthodox to-morrow. When you hear that any man is orthodox the meaning is that he accepts the common definition of the doctrines in question.

PRIEST.—One who serves in holy things. The word is variously defined. Sometimes it conveys the meaning that a priest or officer must come

between the soul and God. It is claimed by some that the soul cannot come into immediate intercourse with God, and can only reach the Divine throne through the medium of a priest. There is another doctrine that every believer in Jesus Christ is by that fact a priest. There is a priesthood of believers. Jesus Christ has made the church a kingdom of priests. Jesus Christ Himself is the great High Priest.

REPENTANCE.—Sorrow for sin. Not sorrow for the mere consequences of wrong-doing, but sorrow for the wrong-doing itself. There is a selfish repentance. The drunkard repents that he has gone to excess simply on the ground that his intemperance has brought punish-

ment upon him. True repentance is based upon the fact, not that sin is painful, but that sin is sinful. 'The abominable thing that God hateth.'

REGENERATION.—A new birth. Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Regeneration is the distinctive work of the Holy Spirit, and is incapable of explanation in words. The mystery is wrought in the soul, and the soul knows the happy result. 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God.'

SCEPTIC.—A doubter; an inquirer; one who asks questions, not that he may dispute, but that he may find the truth. Sceptic is a word which

is often pronounced with a sneer. Sneering does not belong to the word in its right interpretation. There are reverent sceptics. Other sceptics are irreverent. Scepticism itself is neither one nor the other. We must know the character of the sceptic before we can determine the nature of the scepticism.

SCHISM.—Disunion—separation—mutual conflict—possibly mutual distrust. These are some of the applications of the term. The true meaning goes much deeper. We cannot be in schism in relation to one another, simply because opinion should be the result of individual conviction. Schism indicates a relation of the soul to Jesus Christ. A schismatic is one who is not in a right relation to the Divine Head

of the Church. An oak is not a schismatic because it differs from an elm, but a branch may be said to be schismatic if it tore itself from the trunk on which it grew.

SCIENCE.—Knowledge. There is natural science, and there is moral science, and social science, and the like. Science is in quest of facts: their origin, their relation, their combination, and their true meaning. Science deals with things outward; theological science deals with things spiritual, with the soul in all its highest aspirations and responsibilities.

SIN.—The breaking of the Divine law. Breach of human law is crime; breach of Divine law is sin.

Crime is external and social; sin is internal and personal. The soul in its deepest consciousness is the truest interpreter of the meaning of sin.

TEMPTATION.—Trial, pressure on the soul or on the senses, seduction, allurement, enticement to do wrong. Temptation is not sin. Temptation resisted is part of our best education. Jesus Christ was tempted, yet He was without sin. With every temptation God has made a way of escape. 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.'

TRINITY.—The three persons in the Godhead. They are called Father, Son, and Spirit. In the orthodox Christian belief the Three are One. The common expression is 'the Triune

God.' Verbal explanation of this mystery is impossible. We may approach its meaning by inadequate analogies—notably, body, soul, and spirit. In these things man is triune.

TRUTH.—The reality of things. The word truth is very wide in its relation and meanings. There is mathematical truth and there is moral truth, there is also theological truth. Whoever is really in quest of truth is by so much true. It is impossible for the finite to comprehend the infinite, yet the finite may reverently recognise the infinite, and work out its ennobling spirit. Jesus Christ called Himself 'The Truth.' He said, 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.' No man knows all the truth. There is

a truth that is partial, progressive, pointing towards completion. Whosoever really desires to know the truth will in due time discover and enjoy it.

EPILOGUE.

Is the Christian religion as mystical and mysterious and incomprehensible as some persons would make it out to be? Is there any more mystery in the Christian assumptions than there is in any branch or section of what is known as science? There are undoubtedly men who suppose that the Gospel deals with subjects so profound and intricate that the human mind cannot possibly grasp them. Because they cannot grapple with religion they fly for comfort and certainty to science. My contention is that science, truly defined, is every whit as profound and

intricate as the Christian revelation of God.

Mark the definiteness of the challenge, for I mean it to be nothing less. My submission would be that the line of mystery lies along the whole course of human life and inquiry, and is probably, when thoroughly scrutinised, quite as deep at one point as another. To a man of science who had any religious difficulty I should say, 'If I cannot define God, you cannot define an atom,—the ultimate atom,—no man ever saw such an atom,—no man can describe it,—it lies far down and far back in the arcana of the universe, it is at the heart of those essences out of which came the whole body and apparatus falsely, or inadequately, described as material. The ultimate atom is the unknowable secret of what is called matter,—the unintelligent and irresponsible god of the infinite balloon called Nature.'

It is said that theological propositions are difficult. I answer, 'So are the propositions of science.' At the risk of being tedious, I repeat, that you can no more understand the one than you can understand the other. What sailor understands the logarithms, admitted to be inaccurate, by which he determines his latitude and longitude? What arithmetician can give the genesis of an Interminate Decimal? In what manufactured Bethlehem was that most mystical and incognosible thing called Asymptote born?—that fantastic and tricksome line which approaches nearer and nearer to some curve, but can never meet it though infinitely extended?

And what is 'never'? Who knows its terminus? Who can forecast its possibilities? If it is endless it must be infinite, if it is infinite it must be eternal, and beyond the infinite and the eternal what is

there in the Christian religion? Men use the word 'never' as if they understand its meaning. As a word, 'never' is as incomprehensible as God. We first secularise a word and then use it as an argument against religion. It is a false and mischievous procedure, and the most critical and exacting attention should be called to it.

It must be understood that what is difficult at one period of life may be more lightly treated later on. I have read that a famous University teacher has found it almost impossible to explain to beginners such formulæ as, Levers without weight, Wheels without friction, Liquids not compressible. Men of science admit that these formulæ are far from accurate, and their students do not hesitate to describe such formulæ as figments and assumptions. Yet

these despised formulæ, justly ridiculed because of their inaccuracy, very considerably help the working out of great problems and calculations.

If men of science have their initial assumptions why may not Christianity take a leaf out of their book? Without claiming that the existence of God is more than an assumption, and doing this simply for argumentative illustration, and for the moment only, is it not fair to see how this assumption works itself out in the life and growth of those who accept it?

In the Bible there is an elaborate assumption (so for the moment let us call it) that there is in the universe a wondrous Being called God. The question is, 'How does that assumption work out in the lives of those who accept it?' Be it observed that this assumption carries with it more

than intellectual consent,—it carries with it the formation of character, the inspiration of motive, and the sanctification of the soul.

No man can thoroughly receive the God of the Bible into his mind and heart without at least striving after holiness. Again and again let it be said, Godliness is the proof of God. According to our conception of God will be our conception of goodness. The divine existence is not a capricious theorem, it is the most powerful disciplinary factor in human experience. If the man of science assumes his ultimate atom, I see no reason why the man of faith should not assume the living God.

It is singular how very great some minds are in the direction in which no moral prejudice arises. Such minds can

pick up science as a very little thing. Your natural-philosophy propositions are nothing to them. They instantly understand that—

> 'The radius of curvature of the neutral line is to the distance of the neutral point as the original length of the axis to the alteration of that length, or as a certain quantity to the external force; and this quantity has been termed the modulus of elasticity.'

Little paltry conceptions of this sort are nothing even to the untrained tyro in science. He sees through such trifles in a moment, and intellectually despises them, because of his own conscious supremacy. But say to that same tyro, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God,' and instantly he finds

himself to be in the immeasurable and impalpable region of the Unknown and the Unknowable. Science deals in simplicities: religion deals in complexities. Such is his brief and idle creed. His gigantic mind sees at a glance that—

> 'Calling the horizontal absciss x, and the vertical ordinate y, the tangent of the inclination will be $\frac{dy}{dx}$ which, in the case of a parallopiped, must be proportional to the distance from the contiguous ends, and $x = \frac{m\,dy}{dx}$ consequently $x\ dx = m\ dy$ and $\frac{12}{dx} = m\ y$, which is the equation of a parabola.'

He sees no difficulty in superficial statements of this kind. He came into the world to absorb them and to hold them in intellectual contempt. If that same man heard Jesus Christ say, 'If any man

thirst let him come unto Me and drink,' he would complain of mystery, incomprehensibleness, unknowableness, and the like.

What can be the explanation of this? Does he 'not like to retain God' in his knowledge? Does he prefer to deal with propositions remote from conscience? Is he willing to have abundant accommodation for Belief in his intellect, but no accommodation for Belief in his heart?

When the tyro of penetrating and powerful mind studies the works of Olav Roemer, he walks step for step with the learned Dane. When Roemer tells him that Jupiter is 475,693,000 miles distant from the sun, he simply nods his head without ever thinking that he is dealing with the infinite. When Thomas Young explains to him his undulatory theory of light, he smiles upon Young as having come too late into the

possession of a theory which he himself had known from his infancy. It is simply nothing to the learned tyro when he is asked to accept the law that 'the motion of every particle of water is the algebraic sum of all the motions imparted to it.'

The erudite Dane, already quoted, has determined the velocity of light to be 192,500 miles a second. The mind can see through that in a moment. And yet recent science has declared that the velocity of gravitation is at least eight million times greater than the velocity of light. Who can stumble at so mean a proposition?

But when it is said that 'God is love' we enter into mysteries from which the limited human mind shrinks in awe and dismay. When we are told that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, the human mind reels under the overwhelming load of mystery. Yet how easily and

happily that moves in view of the proposition that—

> 'The mean velocity of propagation in dry air at 0° C. of a wave produced by the discharge of a pistol, and reckoned from the mouth of the gun to the moment when it is so enfeebled as to be no longer able to agitate the most sensitive membranes, is 330·6 metres.'

Yet if the man who can so readily understand and apply this law were told that God had spoken to the heart of man, and has revealed Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ, he would instantly take refuge in the Unknowable! The fact is that the constitution of such a man has been torn asunder, so that he has become all intellect and no heart; and it would seem as if the intellect endeavoured to make

up by expansion of credulity what has been lost by the practical extinction of the affectional and emotional nature. Some heretics try to make up for their heresy in one direction by their exaggerated and persecuting orthodoxy in another.

If one thing could be remembered by all Christians, the spiritual union of Christendom would be at once accomplished. After His resurrection Jesus Christ appeared to His disciples, and on one occasion He appeared to five hundred brethren at once. He appeared to Mary; He appeared to Peter; He appeared to the gathered disciples; and then the record says,—'He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked into the country.'

For want of remembering the expression 'in another form' men have been divided from one another, and have set up false

standards, and have further issued unauthorised certificates of orthodoxy. It is a fatal error to suppose that Jesus Christ always appears to all men in precisely the same 'form.' One would think such an error impossible, but, as a matter of fact, it is at work on every side, and the mischief of its operation is incalculable.

It would seem as if a divine purpose ran through the variety of Christ's post-resurrectional appearances. Why not appear to all at once? Why not appear in rigid uniformity of manner and presence? Why should one appearance differ from another by so much as a hair's breadth? If the men to whom Jesus Christ visibly appeared were to bear testimony, probably no two of the testimonies would verbally agree. Yet it was the same Christ,—yet they were the same disciples!

It is even so to-day that Jesus Christ

comes amongst men. He comes to us according to our temperament, our heredity, our environment, and our personality in all its subtle and conflicting expression. That is the one great lesson which the Church has to learn. I could imagine witnesses coming forward and each in his own way bearing testimony to the tender presence and gracious power of the Saviour. Thus :—

> 'I was in great darkness. The whole world was one great cloud without a star. In the very density of my gloom a light suddenly shone upon me and I saw all things in their right magnitude and proper relation. The light struck my understanding and my heart, and under its radiance all things became new. I knew not

the origin of the light nor did I know its meaning at the first, but little by little I began to see that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and that He comes to men by sudden illumination of the whole horizon, and in that hour of release from the prison of darkness I saw how true are the words when Jesus said of Himself, 'I am the light of the world.' Jesus came to me as light. Whenever I see cloudless light I remember the holy day on which He dissolved the clouds of my doubt and fear, and shone upon me like a summer morning.'

That is one man's testimony. Nothing

can shake his conviction. If he had not himself seen the light he could not have been persuaded of the luminousness of Christ's personality, for no man can imagine light,—no man who has not seen the sun can dream its mid-day splendour. Here is 'another form':—

> 'I was in great sorrow. Death had darkened my home. The very ground seemed to reel under my feet. No man could speak a word to which my heart would listen. But, somehow, in the very midnight of my desolation, a voice of hope sounded in my heart; it came like music from afar; there was no cry in the tender tone such as the outward ear could hear; but

there was a minor music which at once caught and enthralled the heart's attention. I heard such music as this,—'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid:' 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord:' 'The Lamb shall lead them unto living fountains of waters:' 'They are not here, they are risen:' and in that glad hour I was grateful that my loved one had passed from the wilderness into the garden of God. It was in the form of Sympathy that Jesus Christ appeared to me. He came to support my heart in the direst assault ever made upon it. He rebuked the

> enemy and drove off the spirits that would have overwhelmed me; and in that hour of comfort I knew that it was Jesus who came to me and filled me with the enrapturing sense that He Himself was the RESURRECTION and the LIFE.'

This second testimony is in a sense the counterpart of the first. In the one case there was great intellectual illumination, in the other there was tender ministry, healing the bruised spirit. The forms were different, the glorious Personality was the same. Should these two hearts be disunited because the appearance, or form, could not be stated in identical verbal terms? The very thought is impious and revolting. Here is another instance of variation :—

'I was standing idle in the market-place. I had intellectually accepted Christianity, and had even united myself to a specific communion. But I was enjoying myself, taking my ease, and leaving the care of the world to the God who made it. Suddenly there came into my heart the conviction that idleness was crime, that neglected responsibilities became aggravated guilt, and that I was bound to be a brother and a helper to every man to whom I could minister. I seemed in that moment to be born again. I saw that I must be up and doing, and that it was impossible for me to love God

with my whole heart without loving my neighbour as myself. So I prayed Christ to send me into His vineyard, and He answered my prayer; and, since I have been working lovingly for Him, I have clearly known that Jesus Christ appeared to me in the form of a SOCIAL SERVANT, teaching me that piety without beneficence is either sentiment or hypocrisy.'

Jesus Christ did not appear to the last man as He appeared to either of the first. Yet He appeared unto them all. The resources of the Divine Being are inexhaustible. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, and His angels are thousands of thousands. We must not limit the Holy

One of Israel. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind as to the form in which Christ appeared to him individually, and let all the witnesses combine in one solid testimony that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, and has appeared to all who love Him.

In 1848 I gave out my first as a boy-preacher, so the issue of *Christian Profiles* synchronises with my pulpit jubilee. It ought to go for something that when a man testifies as to the power of the doctrine of Christ he has the experience of fifty years to fall back upon. Having paid much attention to Agnosticism, Secularism, Altruism, Socialism, and other theories and philosophies of life, I here set it down as my deliberate conviction that Jesus Christ alone can save the world. My belief is that ecclesiastical creeds and forms may undergo the most radical changes, but that Jesus Christ Himself will more and more be seen and felt to be the Light of the world. No attempt to idealise Him can get

rid of His discipline, and no attempt to intellectualise Him can curtail the beneficence which is the vital sign of discipleship. I cannot but hope that those who read this book attentively will feel that it gives a calm and fair report of Christian thought and life, and that it may safely be put into the hands of all who are seriously inquiring about the kingdom of God. That kingdom is surely coming. There is a warmth in the air which means that the sun of righteousness is mounting the throne of high noon, and that ere long the nations will rejoice in the sunshine of brotherhood and peace. Through all the glory of cloudless skies I see the figure of One like unto the Son of Man. He is coming; His breath is the life of the breeze; His smile is the light of the glory. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

I give the solemn witness of holy men as to the central power and effect of Christian faith. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. Here is a creed worthy the signature of the redeemed world in all the ages of its trouble and expectation:—

'You may have strong, eagle-eyed Faith: well—you will probably be enabled to do great things in life, to work wonders, to trample on impossibilities. You may have sanguine Hope: well—your life will pass brightly, not gloomily. But the vision of God as He is, to see the King in His beauty, is vouchsafed not to science, not to talent, but only to Purity and Love.'—*F. W. Robertson.*

'The most acute of reasoners, and most profound of thinkers, the most instructed in earthly knowledge, is nothing, except he has also within him the presence of the Spirit of truth.'—*John Henry Newman.*

'Let every man hold fast to what he believes. Let him affirm with boldness the deepest convictions of his heart. Let him even utter, having first chastened his soul by profoundest humiliation, his anathema against the advocates of error; but whatever he do, let there ever ring in his ears as a voice he cannot refuse, and a law he may never transgress, those words of the Saviour, "Whoever shall do the will of My Father in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." '—*Samuel Newth.*

'In the degree in which we maintain our consecration, and live in the spirit of surrender, trust, and sacrifice, we gather the interpretative sympathies which enable us to understand the life of God.'—*Richard Glover.*

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